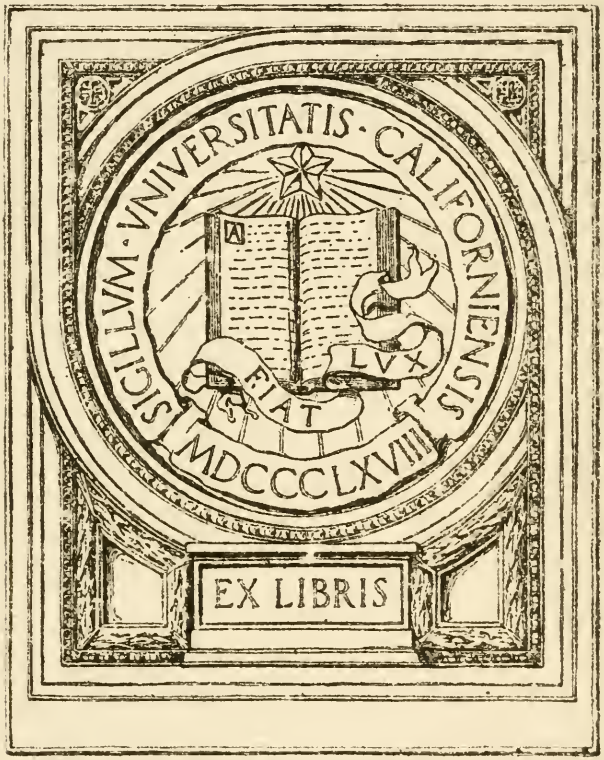
UC-NRLF
$B 321 269
YB 57923

GIFT OF


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

TWO MONTHS IN RUSSIA

July—September, 1914

BY

W. MANSELL MERRY, M.A.

(Vicar of St. Michael's, Oxford)

Oxford

B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

MCMXVI

DK265
M4

PRINTED AT
THE HOLYWELL PRESS
OXFORD

PRESERVATION
COPY ADDED
ORIGINAL TO BE
RETAINED
1994

FOREWORD.

'Non cuivis contingit adire Corinthum'—so the old Roman poet. Had he lived in these modern days, he might have with equal truth insisted that it is not every one who gets the chance of going to Russia, especially with all expenses paid and the prospect of some five or six weeks' new and interesting holiday-work before him. Such, however, was the fortunate opportunity that befel myself in 1914 in the form of an invitation from the authorities of the English Church at Petrograd to undertake the duties of the Chaplaincy there during the months of July and August. As will appear from a perusal of the pages that follow, my sojourn in the land of the Tsar was destined to involve me in many experiences of a very different character to those I had any reason to anticipate. So far as I am aware, no account has yet been published of the scenes and incidents that marked in Petrograd the early days of the Great War; neither, again, I believe, has anyone written of the diversions and difficulties attendant on an Englishman's attempts to find a way home from Russia after the outbreak of hostilities. It is with the purpose, therefore, of filling this gap, and in the hopes that a plain tale of personal adventure in both these connexions may prove to have a certain interest of its own, that this little chronicle makes its somewhat belated appearance.

313926

The book consists of selections from a journal kept as carefully as circumstances would from time to time permit, and, as such, presents itself without apology in more or less its original form. Such selections seem to me to serve sufficiently my general object in putting these reminiscences into permanent shape, and, with that end in view, they have been divided into three sections :—

(1). BEFORE THE WAR; life in Petrograd (July 11—July 22).

(2). OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES; journey to Odessa and back (July 30th—August 22).

(3). DURING THE WAR; home-coming (September 3—September 9).

I wish to tender my acknowledgments for incidental information to Baedeker's excellent Handbook on 'Russia.'

W. M. M.

OXFORD,
May, 1916.

PART I

Before the War; Life in Petrograd

(July 11—July 22)

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/twomonthsinrussi00merrrich

TWO MONTHS IN RUSSIA

PART I

BEFORE THE WAR; LIFE IN PETROGRAD

Saturday, July 11th.

A sweltering hot day, but a mere triviality in the way of temperature to what is presently to be endured on the Continent. An early rise finds me at 8.30 at Charing Cross Station, with heavy luggage registered through to Petrograd, and a seat booked in the 9. a.m. boat-train for Dover, where two hours later, in fellowship with a large and miscellaneous Cockney excursion, I board the '*Princesse Clémentine*' en route for Ostend. At 11.25 we are off beneath a blazing sun and on a delightfully calm sea—the commencement of a journey, which, for one, at least, of the party, is to prove itself before its close two months later at Newcastle full of experiences no less interesting than eventful, anxious and trying. How little do I dream on landing at Ostend some three and a half hours later what strange and cruel vicissitudes are shortly to be the lot not only of the gay town itself, but also of that brave and hapless little kingdom of which it is the most famous and fashionable of sea-side resorts! A hurried and quite casual 'visite de douane'; the services of an enormously fat and perspiring porter; the display to a drowsy uniformed official of much assorted literature in the shape of coupons and tickets and platz-karten—and I am settled in the tiny compartment of the Nord Express, of which by unusual

good luck I am to hold solitary and undisputed possession right up to the Russian frontier. At 3.55 (English time) we roll lumberingly out of the huge station. Belgium is not a wildly exciting country to travel through from the picturesque point of view. At least, there is little enough that is scenically attractive in that flat, well-cultivated part of it through which the line runs *viâ* Bruges and Ghent to Brussels, unless one excepts the ancient cities themselves, with their great towers and belfries dominating like light-houses the sea of roofs and chimneys in the midst of which they rear their massive or graceful heads. Indeed, one may truly say that the entire run from the sea-coast through Germany to Wirballen—and after that with very little improvement—is about on the same dead level of tedious and exasperating dulness as that dismal stretch of country familiar to travellers from Calais to Paris. After Brussels and round Liège (of unhappy and heroic memory) it temporarily betters itself, but, once in the Fatherland, excepting at the rarest of intervals, like 'Private James' of the 'Bab Ballads,' 'no characteristic trait has it of any distinctive kind.' Perhaps it is because of this hopeless monotony of things external that one finds oneself so soon making friends on board the train. Before an hour has passed the restaurant-car has become a social centre. Everybody talks to everybody else, and extraordinarily interesting, and, sometimes, ultimately, invaluably useful, are these chance acquaintances of the 'speise-wagen.' The man who shares my table at the first dinner served is a most charming Scotsman who speaks five languages fluently, and does the journey to Berlin ten times a year; another, who sits just opposite is an American who claims the privilege of playing host because he 'reckoned directly he set eyes on me that I

hailed from New England—and if I didn't, I ought-er!' Next to the solace of this spirit of genial camaraderie comes that of meals, admirable in quality, plentiful in quantity, and capable of indefinite prolongation over 'the walnuts and the wine,' or their more modern equivalent of dessert and cigars. How often in after-days of war-conditions in Russia did I bethink myself regretfully and longingly of this luxury of travel, when the only thing that lay between a hungry man and starvation was a furious dash down a long, soldier-crowded platform into a buffet filled to overflowing with a struggling, ravenous multitude, on the bare chance that while one was buying what food might be available the train would wait long enough to give one time to return safely to one's carriage! Woe betide the man who is still packed in that surging jam of people when the 'treti zvonók' or 'three strokes' clang out on the station gong to notify an instant departure!

Sunday, July 12th.

Another terrifically tropical day. Up at 6.30 a.m., after a night's rest considerably interfered with by the heat and noise and violent motion of the train. Berlin is reached just as an early breakfast is finished, at 7.30; the Friedrichstrasse Station teeming with folk all in their Sunday best, and all, apparently, bent on holiday-making in the country. In the darkness we have passed through Cologne, Düsseldorf and Hanover, so already about a third of our journey's length is covered. One is not allowed much of a sight of the Kaiser's Capital from the railway, but enough is visible to give a very good idea of its fine, imposing buildings and spacious, busy, tree-lined streets. Where are the soldiers? Considering how soon the war of 'frightfulness' is to begin,

it seems curious, on later reflection, how little they were in evidence. But, excepting at Spandau and at Königsberg in East Prussia, I have hardly seen a single 'pickelhaube' on the whole run through Germany. Perhaps most of them are already in the places where they are presently to be wanted! Again yesterday's weary monotony of outlook—a perfectly level landscape on either hand, yellow to the horizon with wheat ripe for harvesting, and relieved here and there with scattered belts of clustering fir-trees. Towns few and far between. Schneidemühl is passed about 11.30, then Dirschau, then Elbing, and at length the outskirts of Königsberg—quite a large and important place on an arm of the Gulf of Dantzig—are entered at 4 p.m. Here we are given a welcome five minutes' stop, and the train then backs out of the terminus on the concluding stage of its run. One incidental feature of this part of the trip must not be omitted from mention, *viz*: the swarms of butterflies that disport themselves among the thistle-blooms growing beside the railway. White they are, for the most part, of the ordinary English type, but flitting about in the company of these are many quite unfamiliar—blues of various shades and sizes, pale yellows, duns and drabs and bright red-browns. Two more hours of this unbroken sameness brings us at 6 p.m. to Eydtkuhnen, the East German frontier-town. From here to Wirballen, the first station in Russia, is but a matter of five minutes, the dividing-line between the two countries being a tiny winding rivulet, guarded on either side by armed sentries. At last the momentous hour has arrived, which is to test the truth of many a gloomy prophecy of the Cassandras at home. Supposing that, after all, one's passport has a fatal flaw in it! Supposing for this reason or for that

one's personal appearance or the contents of one's baggage do not meet with the approval of the authorities! Supposing any other disastrous contingency one can or cannot conceive! One has heard and read so many travellers' tales of 'awkward incidents at the frontier' that, on arriving there for the first time, one can scarcely be blamed for a certain sense of disquieting apprehensiveness. Never mind! 'In for a penny, in for a pound!' The brakes squeal and grind; the long, heavy train comes slowly to a halt—and, in the twinkling of an eye, it is invaded by a tumultuous army of porters, who rush into each compartment, snatch up all they can see in the way of hand-luggage, and tear out again with their booty, leaving the owner to follow in their wake as best he can, into a huge hall that forms part of the station premises. As he breathlessly enters, two grim policemen standing in the doorway relieve him of his passport—the most priceless treasure of all he possesses. Will he ever see it again? Will some one else claim it? Will it be handed to the wrong person by accident? Never mind, once more! Like all the rest, he must take his chance. Did he, by the way, note his porter's number? No? Then quite possibly, he may lose his baggage as well. This time, however, he does not; for, as he stands with his fellow-travellers round the raised platform in the centre of the hall, the faithful 'nosílshtchik' swings a couple of hand-bags on to the counter in front, demands the passenger's 'gepäckschein' (registered luggage ticket), dives away into the murky distance, and shortly returns dragging along the big trunk, which is duly deposited in the society of the smaller 'grips' to await the inquisition of the Customs. For an Englishman of distinguished and innocent mien (so I find!) the inspection is most perfunctory and lenient. No ques-

tions are asked—they could not be answered if they were! A *douanière* slips her hand down one side of my opened portmanteau, nods an 'All right' to a uniformed official standing by, who immediately affixes a green label on all my paraphernalia, and the dreaded scrutiny is over. Meanwhile, passports have been carefully examined by a bevy of white-coated gendarmes at a table on the opposite side of the hall, and are presently brought round by a gold-laced personage, who asks one's name, refers to the sheaf of papers he carries, somehow conveys to one the good tidings that one's own is there, but does not return it. That part of the ordeal is the duty of two stalwart policemen, who stand at the exit from the hall that leads on to another platform where the Russian train is waiting. There, porter and handbags meet the traveller once more: an inspector scans his ticket and gives him his appointed 'platz-karte,' and he climbs aboard to find the compartment and seat already reserved for him—and to thank his stars that the trial is safely over. At Wirballen one puts forward one's watch an hour ahead of mid-European time, this being the second advance of the kind since leaving England, so that it is as late as 7.30 before a start is made for Vilna, Dvinsk, Pskov and Petrograd. A most comfortable carriage, mine, of the corridor type and of the roomiest dimensions, but though the Russian rolling-stock beats the French and German for size, it is a long way behind them (probably owing to poorly laid and badly kept metals) in smoothness and silence of running. It is soon after leaving the frontier that I am given my first introduction to the lavishness of Russian hospitality. Two officers, whose acquaintance I have made earlier in the day—one of whom speaks English like a native, and the other broken French—invite a

friend and myself to a 'dinner of welcome' in the restaurant-car, and, nothing loath, we accept. Little do we imagine what a gastronomic test is in store! The meal commences in the approved national style with small glasses of neat vódka, tempered to the palate by mouthfuls of pickled cucumber, and continues through a multitude of strange and (mostly) appetizing courses, the viands being washed down from start to finish with unlimited potations of sweet champagne. We sit down to eat at 8.15; at 1 a.m. I retire to bed, and as I rise from the table I hear fresh orders given by my hosts for another bottle of Mumm! And yet those two hardy, kindly souls are breakfasting heartily next morning at 7.30—and looking as fresh as paint! And so am I!

Monday. July 13th.

Smoke, pungent smoke, everywhere, making the eyes smart, and the throat sore, and darkening the heavens to the remotest skyline all around. Even up to the edge of the railway not only are trees and heather burning, but the peaty bogs, dried up many feet deep by the torrid heat of the last fortnight, are smouldering with a dense suffocating reek. We hear that all over the wild country-side through which our train is passing troops are making futile endeavours to stay the progress of the flames: but the peasantry themselves, true to their time-honoured motto of '*nitchevó*'—'it doesn't matter'—seem indifferent to the conflagration, so long as their own property is not menaced by its spread. So, for the most part, the forests and moors are left to burn themselves out. By the time breakfast is over we are but two hours distant from our destination, the big towns of Vilna, Dvinsk and Pskov having been passed during the night and early hours of the morning. There

being little to interest one in the way of scenery as we run through Luga (8.40) and Gatchina, with its imperial palace (10.0), packing and the toilet are the order of the day, until, miles of depressing flatness and a thin fringe of mean-looking suburbs being left behind, we come to a halt at 10.35 in the Warsaw Station of Petrograd. With friends to meet me at the rather imposing-looking terminus, the difficulties—more especially the linguistic one—that confront the solitary traveller are delightfully removed. That allusion to language recalls one of the most grievous of my disillusionments in the land of the Tsar; this—that for all practical purposes French is useless. I had been told—and had gladly believed it—that a reasonable acquaintance with that tongue would enable me to make myself understood anywhere. There could not be a more disastrous mistake. Generally speaking, none but the upper classes of Russian society are familiar with it, if one excepts, perhaps, the hotels and a few of the bigger shops in the fashionable quarters of the city. German is (or was!) of far more extensive service than French, and if you have no power of explaining yourself in that, there is absolutely no other alternative for you, supposing you have no Russian-speaking comrade to make matters easy, than to learn a selection of stock words and phrases in that appallingly difficult speech. At the same time it is reassuring to know, and a great relief to realize, with how very little of the language one can get along. There is always pantomine to fall back upon, and it is generally the fault of the actor if the meaning of his theatricals is not quickly guessed at. The 'tchelovyéks' (waiters) and 'izvóshtchiks' (cabmen) are, through long practice, particularly smart at interpreting dumb-show, and even in shops where not a syllable other than Russian was

spoken or understood, I have without undue delay succeeded in buying, by means of demonstrations affording immense entertainment to the gentleman behind the counter, articles requiring as varied an assortment of gestures as ink and a walking-stick, iodine and a shaving-brush! The average Russian, however, is nothing if not polite, and there are two words, which, when once at one's tongue's end, will cover a multitude of other deficiencies in 'the lingo'; the one is 'pozháluista'—'please'; the other, 'spacíbo'—'thank you.'

There are two sensations which, I fancy, must struggle for the mastery in the mind of anyone, who, at the end of a long railway journey, takes his first dróshky-drive in Petrograd. He takes his seat in that queer ramshackle little vehicle, quite the largest part of whose outfit is the long-haired, ragged-bearded, top-hatted, heavily 'dressing-gowned' driver, and starts forth in the keenest spirit of excited anticipation. It is all such a new world: everything—men, costumes, streets, buildings—is going to be so fraught with interest, so full of novelty and surprise. And he gets to his destination—at least I did—both a good deal shaken up in body and disappointed in soul. Why? The first part of his condition is only too easily explained. No one who has not ventured himself 'en voiture' on Russian roads—even on the streets of Russia's capital—can have any idea of how unspeakably, unbelievably bad a road can be. To begin with, they are nearly all cobble-stoned or paved with stone sets: that in itself need not point over much in their disfavour, supposing any pretence whatever to be made of keeping them even tolerably in repair. But, apparently, except in the principal parts of the city, this is the last thing that is ever thought of, with the result that their surface is a disgusting and

perilous combination of deep and immemorial mud, and, not holes, in their ordinary sense in such circumstances, but yawning pitfalls, into which one's frail little carriage suddenly drops with a bone-wrenching crash, and out of which it miraculously emerges intact, only to flop lurching into another crevasse a few yards further on. How the flimsy-looking dróshky stands this incessant and appalling strain on wheel and spring: how, except by his own sheer weightiness of frame, the izvóshtchik retains his reeling, leaping seat; and how, the gallant, struggling steed manages to continue pulling the storm-tossed vehicle along, and passengers and luggage succeed in remaining unscattered to the four winds of heaven under stress of such riotous experience, is a miracle that has no ready explanation. There is one feature, however, about a drive in Russia which has considerably much of compensation about it; its cheapness. No one dreams of taking the first dróshky that presents itself any more than he does of agreeing to pay the first price the driver demands. The usual procedure is to go to where a line of waiting carriages is drawn up at the edge of the street, and, having previously made up your mind as to the fullest fare you are prepared to pay for the trip in question, to walk past driver after driver mentioning both price and destination until at last the offer is accepted with a 'Pozháluista' that has a good deal of depressed resignation about it—or, all having curtly refused the offer, one tardily repents of his unwillingness, whips up his horse, and hastens furiously after you with an invitation to jump on board. To embark on a dróshky without a bargain like this is to put oneself at the mercy of a rascal who will certainly make the most of his opportunity. Generally speaking, one can drive about 1½ miles for

25—30 kopecks (about 6d.—8d.), not forgetting, of course, the invariably expected tip. I said just now that one's first acquaintance with the sights of Petrograd brought with it a certain sense of disappointment. Perhaps, partly it is one's own fault for expecting too much: but mostly I think it is because, as is the lamentable case with our own Oxford and Cambridge, the parts through which one has to pass on the way from the train to its main and central portions by no means err on the side of attractive picturesqueness. Petrograd is a huge, straggling city, with its chief objects of architectural importance and interest either grouped in its midst or flanking both sides of the Nevá. Otherwise, with the occasional exception of quaint-looking and gaudily-coloured churches, it offers very little to the eye that is not insignificant and commonplace. Especially is this so in its outlying districts, where the buildings are poor to contemptibleness, and the general environment depressingly bankrupt in appearance. On the other hand, notably in the Nevsky Prospékt and in the neighbourhood of the Winter Palace, there are edifices, ecclesiastical, imperial, civic, commercial and domestic, which would be a credit to any capital; although even these, again, are disappointing through the lack in them (with the exclusion of the Churches) of any of those striking national characteristics of style, to see and enjoy which one must travel as far inland as Moscow. In other words, there is too much of Paris and Berlin even in the best quarters of Petrograd to make it structurally satisfying. The Warsaw Station is some two miles distant from the Galérnaya, the street in which for at least a part of my six weeks' sojourn I am to make my abode. Not a very prepossessing locality methinks as I clatter down it for the first time; dirty,

narrow and noisy, with great, garish, stucco-fronted houses let out in flats (the façade of one is painted light-green!) or domiciles equally lofty but of a more humble order, varying from a shady-looking 'tractír,' or public-house, at the corner to a printing-works in the middle, and sundry 'harmless, necessary' shops studded at intervals all the way along. But appearances are ever deceitful, and the accommodation placed at my disposal therein by the delightful Englishman who plays my host is as comfortable and homely as need be. Here I come across very shortly that peculiarly Russian 'institution' —the 'dvórnik' or police-agent—whose guardian-presence on the premises is by law ordained. He it is who, within forty-eight hours, must report to the authorities each stranger's arrival, and produce to them his passport for inspection and stamping with the official permit to reside. On the visitor's departure, too, the 'dvórnik' must concern himself with the passport again; this time for its inscribing with formal leave to quit the country. What on earth he does with himself when his services are not in this way required I have been totally unable to discover. However, as a rule, he is a quiet, civil, unassuming man, with a wonderful and enviable gift, like that of the shepherd in the story, of, 'sometimes, sitting and thinking' on his little stool in the sunny doorway, 'and, sometimes, just sitting!' The special interest to myself of the Galérnaya is the fact that in it, almost immediately opposite my lodgings, is the English Church, of which I am in temporary charge. Anything less like a church externally it would be hard to imagine. Outside, the appearance is precisely similar to that of the other larger houses in the street, but directly one goes through a side-door into the large courtyard hitherto concealed things wear a very different aspect. In a

way, it is like entering into some College quadrangle, with, facing you, the large white-washed block, in the upper storey of which the Church proper is situated, and, on either hand and behind, the buildings used for the Chaplains' and clerk's residences and for various social clubs, stores and offices—quite an impressive and admirably-arranged ensemble. The ground on which these buildings stand is English soil, it having been granted to the Church in perpetuity of freehold by Peter the Great. The Church itself, dedicated to St. Mary and All Saints, was erected in 1815 in the severe classical style. It is of considerable seating capacity, and is remarkable for its fine stained-glass windows and for the splendid mosaics—mostly memorials—that here and there adorn its walls. The interior is plain almost to bareness, but the High Altar is a strikingly handsome feature, and the warm (if not artistic) colouring of walls and pillars is an effective antidote to any impression of cheerlessness that might otherwise be given. The accommodation provided for the Chaplains is exceedingly good and comfortable; the lodgings of the senior priest being particularly spacious and pleasant, with windows on the west side looking out on to the English Quay and the ever-busy traffic of the broad, brown, swirling Nevá beyond. Conspicuous among the various Church institutions that find headquarters in this compact 'settlement' is a great lending-library, most palatially housed, and containing thousands of books in many languages and ranging from ancient 'dry-as-dusts' to the latest novel. The work of the Chaplain and his assistants at Petrograd is by no means a sinecure. It requires all the devotion, tact and energy of an exceptionally 'strong' man. Apart from the routine-duties more immediately connected with the Church, he

is the spiritual chief of the whole widely-scattered English Colony, a position that makes many claims upon his time and powers other than those of a purely pastoral kind. Moreover, he is responsible for providing religious ministrations at various distant centres, such as, for instance, at Schlüsselburg, a four hours' trip up the Nevá, at the river's junction with Lake Ládoga, where there is an important English calico-printing industry; at Helsingfors, the capital of Finland, a twenty hours' steamer journey across the Gulf, and at Narva, a big manufacturing centre, some 100 miles away to the west. Of course, in the summer, when all who can manage to afford it leave the City for the sea-side or their country 'dátchas,' the Chaplain's work is reduced to a minimum: it is in the winter-time that his hands are embarrassingly full.

Strange weather it is, that of my first day in Petrograd; not a breath of wind, an absolutely baking heat, and, withal, not a glimpse of the sun, but a low sky heavily overcast, not with cloud, but with the smoke of the burning countryside that has slowly drifted up from the south and west, and now hangs like a thick grey pall overhead. In the house it is comparatively cool, but what keen traveller can stay indoors when new scenes without are clamouring for notice? So after lunch my footsteps turn in the direction of the fine Nikoláevski Bridge that leads across the Nevá from the English Quay to the Vasíli Óstrov (Basil Island) opposite. If there were nothing else to see here, the 'all sorts and conditions' of folk who crowd the bridge's footwalks, and the long unbroken lines of wheeled traffic that, flowing in either direction, fill up the intervening roadway, are a sufficiently entertaining spectacle in themselves. Such a miscellany of tongues and types

and apparel—from the smart, be-medalled officer, a striking figure in the gay bravery of his regimentals, to the unkempt, slouching muzhík, with his sallow, hungry-looking face, his frowsy peaked cap, his dirty linen blouse and the invariable jack-boots outside his trousers. Such an extraordinary medley, too, of vehicles—the jaunty dróshky, the lumbering country cart, the heavily-laden lorry, the spruce motor-car with its chattering freight of gaily-dressed damsels, the seedy taxi, the self-assertive, clanging electric tram, crammed with fares to the last inch of standing-room on its platform! It is a ceaseless, hurrying, fascinating, ever-changing pageant at which one never tires of looking. But the river below provides an irresistible enchantment as well. Which-ever way you gaze—down or up its wide and eddying stream—there is perpetual life and movement. Boats with sails and boats with oars; warships and ocean-tramps; Government launches and square-rigged traders; fussy little tugs, somehow or other dragging behind them a long trail of gigantic wood-barges from the Volga; shabby little 'bateaux-mouches,' slipping swiftly along between their various calling-stations on either bank—it is all surely most 'un-Russian,' one says quite mistakenly to oneself, this feverishness of industry, this purposefulness of haste! Look off now for a moment from this busy 'va et vient' of shipping to the buildings that line the Quays. Turn your eyes west and south: that is where the Port lies, and, beyond it, Cronstadt and the open Baltic. Those volumes of black smoke belching from the tall chimneys on your left mark the machine-shops of the New Admiralty: nearer to you, on this side of the Byzantine-looking Church of 'Our Saviour on the water,' and almost abreast of the English Church, is the Tsar's private landing-stage, with, prob-

ably, at anchor close at hand the Imperial Yacht 'Standardt.' On your right is a succession of floating piers and bustling docks, overshadowed in the nearer foreground by the queer onion-shaped minarets of the new Church of the Kíev Lávra, on the ground-floor of which the monks keep shop for the sale of ikons. Now cross the bridge (when you can do so safely!) and stand facing north and east. The great buildings on your left are Imperial Academies and Museums; that slender, glittering shaft rising to an immense height (394 ft.) beyond is the spire of the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul, the burying-place of the Románof Tsars, built within the precincts of the famous (and infamous) fortress-prison of the same name. In front, a quarter of a mile away, is the temporary wooden Dvortzóvi Bridge, with a glimpse beyond it of its stone successor in course of construction; and behind that again, is the iron Tróitzki Bridge, spanning the surging current at its widest part (645 yards), another half mile further up. To your right, the line of quays—the mooring-place of an unwieldy fleet of barges—leads on to the big, yellow-painted block of the Admiralty, surmounted by a lofty cupola and gleaming 'flèche': dominating the intervening houses is the great, golden dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral—the most prominent of Petrograd's landmarks; past the Admiralty rises the interminable dull crimson facade of the Imperial Winter Palace, and at the end of the long succeeding vista of more palaces and mansions can just be distinguished the red frontage of an edifice of peculiar interest to every subject of King George—the British Embassy. Petrograd is pre-eminently the city of sunsets, and the scene I have tried to outline above is one whose beauty must be witnessed to be believed, when wrapped in the pearl-grey mystery

of early eventide, and when opalescent water and burnished spire and painted wall stand out against a darkling background, aglow with the ruddy flame of a low westering sun.

To-night, after dinner, my host has taken me by tram to one of the best-known pleasure-resorts in Petrograd —the Aquarium. Why 'Aquarium' I know not, except on the principle of 'lucus a non lucendo.' For the place consists only, so far as I could see, of picturesque, illuminated gardens, in the midst of which, beside a theatre of somewhat unsavoury reputation, there stands a vast, glass-roofed hall, containing refreshment-rooms, band-stands, and an open stage. The grounds are full of folk of both sexes, admirably well-behaved, and enjoying immensely the juggling and cinematographic sideshows provided for their entertainment, while a large orchestra discourses (to our own more particular delight) a series of selections from English musical comedies. The real 'business' of the Aquarium, however, does not commence until midnight, when 'le monde où l'on s'amuse' arrives with intentions both gastronomic and amatory. Of this we see nothing, for our stay is not a long one. But, as a matter of fact, this revelry of 'the wee sma' hours' is too often of a sort that can be missed with advantage. The bowl flows far too freely for rigid sobriety of behaviour, and we are told later that on this very night of our visit an inoffensive civilian was shot dead by an officer for having in some way or another unwittingly annoyed him. Perhaps it may be this 'fishiness' in, if not the character, at any rate in the occasional conduct of some of its more distinguished patrons, that makes the title of the Aquarium not altogether a misnomer!

Tuesday, July 14th.

The heat continues terrific. 'Russia, a furnace,' the newspapers say; I quite agree. Last night the temperature refused to go below 100° Fahrenheit! And the forest-fires are spreading everywhere. We have just heard what a narrow escape from destruction the great gunpowder and dynamite factory at Schlüsselburg has had quite recently. The peat-lands in which it is situate became involved in the conflagration; the military were telephoned for from Ust-Izhóra (some 30 versts away), and two battalions of sappers were immediately despatched by steamer. For a whole day and night the soldiers, together with a thousand peasants and workmen, fought the flames. The buildings were drenched with water; road trenches were dug in every direction; liquid mud and sand were poured on every threatened spot; but only a providential change of wind prevented the dreaded catastrophe. The fire raged on as furiously as ever, but its advance shifted eastwards, and the danger was at an end.

We sometimes complain in England—and not always unreasonably—about the flies. But we have really little enough to be irritated over. No one can possibly imagine the extent of the nuisance that, not midges and mosquitoes only—though they are bad enough—but the familiar and irrepressible 'musca domestica' can actively represent, until he has visited Russia in the sultry summer-time. In the very elementary conditions of sanitary practice that prevail in this part of the world, the fly has, of course, an ideal breeding-ground, and he is not unmindful of his chances. As the result, he is everywhere, in uncountable, unthinkable myriads. By day, he practically takes possession of the house; 'nihil a me alienum puto' is his insufferable motto. Air, ceiling,

walls, window, food, drink, face and hands—the place and one's sacred person are literally alive with them. By night, he condescends to sleep until the first signs of dawn, and then, a long good-bye to one's hopes of slumber, unless thick curtains keep out the stimulating light. 'Necessity is the mother of invention,' and some genius has produced a wonderful and deadly 'tue-mouche,' purchasable in any ironmonger's shop in Russia—a sort of flat wire brush fitted with a handle—without a battery of which 'no household is complete,' and apart from whose powers of summary execution the peace of the individual would be impossible.

To-day the wind is blowing from the north, so far carrying away the smoke-mist with it that we are treated to a considerable amount of sunlight. The temptation is too strong to resist, and in spite of the risk of awkward objections on the part of the police—for photography may not be practised in Petrograd without a formal licence—I sling my kodak over my shoulder and start out on the not very difficult search for subjects. The morning is spent in strolling up and down the quays, with prolonged dawdles on the bridges, and a good many films are exposed without any interruption at the hands of the 'gorodvói' more serious than occasional glances, half-inquisitive, half-interested. As a rule, anyhow in the larger towns, the Russian policeman is quite a decent fellow, though, if necessary, he can make himself extraordinarily unpleasant to those who have fallen foul of the law. He lacks in appearance the smartness of his French confrère, nor has he, perhaps, the fine physique and stately dignity of bearing characteristic of our English 'Robert,' but he is none the less a well set-up and intelligent-looking personality, and cuts quite a good, soldierly figure in a summer

uniform consisting of khaki-coloured jacket, with yellow and red facings and braidings, military cap, and dark trousers. He is armed with sword and revolver, and carries as well a small white-painted bâton which he uses for controlling the traffic. Indeed, care for his appearance is not one of the least of the duties incumbent on him. I happened to have business to transact one day at the chief police-station in Petrograd, and heard as I entered a harangue in progress, delivered in tones of unmistakable displeasure. At the further end of the room was an unfortunate 'bobby' being unsparingly 'hauled over the coals' by his superior. I asked a Russian-speaking friend who was with me what was the matter, and he explained that the sin being so heavily visited on the head of the offender was that of having stood on point-duty in the middle of the Nevsky Prospékt, clad in an untidy coat disfigured by a stain upon the pocket.

Talking of cameras, I said just now that the use of them was forbidden without formal authorization from the police. But to ask for a thing at the hands of Russian officials is one thing, and to get it quite another. As a matter of fact, thirteen weary, disappointing, wasted days are to elapse before I come into possession —and then only by re-iterated application—of the desired document. As untoward events are to prove, it is to be useless to me almost as soon as granted. However, it may be interesting, perhaps, to give the permit's translated text in full: —

'CERTIFICATE.'

GIVEN TO THE PRIEST OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, BRITISH SUBJECT, WALTER MANSELL MERRY.

'In that he is authorized during one year to take 'photographs of various buildings and views of St.

'Petersburg and its environments within the precincts 'of the suburban police districts, with the condition 'that while he is carrying out his work there should be 'no hindrance to all free circulation in the streets.

'Besides the above, the holder is bound by the following conditions: (1) The present certificate does 'not give him the right to open a photographic studio 'as an industrial concern: (2) The certificate also 'does not give the holder the right to photograph '(*a*) processions, views of all pageants, etc., in which 'members of the Imperial Family take part, and for 'which special authority is required, (*b*) separate 'persons and groups without getting their permission. (3) The holder of the present certificate is 'bound to obey implicitly all requirements and orders 'of all ranks of the police as regards the place where 'the photographic apparatus may be placed for 'photographing all scenes of public promenades and 'all pageants where crowds collect. The revenue 'tax has been paid.'

The above tax amounted to seventy-five kopécks—about 1s. 6d. The document, of course, is a printed one, comprehensive enough in its regulations to cover every possible case, but it certainly suggests an entertaining and impressive picture of 'the Priest of the Anglican Church' holding up the traffic, say, in the Nevsky Prospékt, while he manipulates an engine so unwieldy as a quarter-plate kodak, and attempting to add to the meagreness of his clerical income by starting in some obscure region of the city a shop for the production of 'sticky-backs!'

This tremendously torrid weather has already brought me face to face with one serious drawback of, more particularly, summer-residence in Petrograd. The ordinary water of the place is not only doubtful in colour but actually deadly in character. The source of its

supply is the Nevá, and, as all the sewage of the city finds its outlet into that river, it is not surprising that the consumption of what is pumped into the houses out of it should scarcely be conducive to health. Every drop of it for table-use has to be boiled and filtered, and even then it is wise to err on the safe side by leaving the carafe alone and using either distilled water purchasable in huge jars from the chemists, or, better still, some one or other of the excellent 'eaux gazeuses' which are a natural product of the country. Every public-house is obliged by law to provide outside its main entrance a barrel of sterilized water for public consumption, but, in spite of paternal legislation, cholera, as the result of unwisely quenched thirst, is far from being unknown. Perhaps it is because of this necessity of boiling all drinking-water that Russia has become pre-eminently a tea-loving country. The domestic 'samovár,' or great, brightly polished urn, is, practically, the rallying-point of the household, and 'tchai' is being brewed at all hours of the day. The leaf is imported from China, and the better grades of it are very expensive. One drinks tea, not in cups, but in tumblers, fitted with a metal frame that provides a handle; no milk, but plenty of sugar, is added, and a thin slice of lemon is put to float on the top. The concoction is perfectly delicious! By the way, the tea is not made in the 'samovár,' as I find is commonly imagined, but in a pot, as at home. The purpose of the 'samovár' is to keep a supply of boiling water always at hand. The apparatus consists of a circular vessel with an open chimney running right through it. At the base of this chimney is a mass of incandescent charcoal, whose heat, passing up the shaft, not only imparts itself freely to the water on the principle of the

tubular boiler, but also serves to keep warm the tea-pot that is placed, when not in use, on the outlet. As to drinks other than 'the cup that cheers'—well, these have to be alluded to as things of the past, the Tsar's edict having tabooed all alcohol throughout his Empire, at any rate for the duration of the war. But, to speak retrospectively, apart from the wines and beers of home production, which are both good and inexpensive, there is one universal beverage that calls for a word of more particular notice, namely, vódka. This is a rye-spirit, quite colourless, and varying considerably in quality according to price, the manufacture of which until quite recently was one of the most lucrative of Government monopolies. The taste of it—a sort of warm aromatic earthiness—can scarcely by the wildest stretch of fancy be called pleasant. It is not meant to be mixed with water, but one or two small glass fulls of it are generally swallowed neat as an 'apéritif' or appetiser before meals. The cheapness of its lower grades put it alas! in times past over-temptingly within the reach of all, with disastrous effects upon the national sobriety. A striking idea of the former extent of the consumption of vódka, and of the financial sacrifice the Russian Government has been prepared to make to save its people from their most insidious and devastating enemy, can be gleaned from the fact that the annual revenue accruing from its sale has latterly amounted to something like £93,000,000 a year. By the way, there is a very popular 'teetotal' drink that deserves passing notice. It rejoices in the name of 'kvas'—a gay-looking potion either yellow or red in colour, and distinctly palatable and refreshing in times of thirst. What its constituents are I know not, but I believe that rye again plays a considerable part in its composition.

This afternoon is divided for me between duty and pleasure. The first half of the programme has necessitated the hire of a dróshky, and consists of driving about Petrograd generally in search of the domiciles of those to whom I must needs present my letters of introduction. From the sight-seer's point of view, an interesting excursion enough, but gauged by the amount of 'business' transacted, not an unmitigated success. No one is at home! However, an unlooked-for element of humour is introduced into the proceedings by the ridiculous failure of every attempt to explain the object of my visit to the 'suisses' who guard the various doors. At one house alone—the American Embassy—does the hall-porter know anything whatever of the English tongue. At the others, only Russian and German are understood—not a word of French! And the Gordian knot has in every case to be severed by an abrupt pushing of my card into the reluctant hand of the official and a precipitate retreat into the refuge of my waiting carriage. Yet those cards reach their destination quite safely, in spite of the unpromising preliminaries. The second half of the afternoon provides ample compensation for the fiasco of its earlier hours in the form of strenuous lawn-tennis. It is a game, this, that of latter years has 'caught on' tremendously in Russia, and Petrograd, notably at the 'Sportsmen's' Krestóvski, and the English Club, whose head-quarters are the exercising-grounds of the Cadet Academy on the Vasíli Óstrov, is well supplied with excellent cement courts. At the latter place the players are mostly my own countrymen, and the standard of proficiency is high. There are cooler occupations in life than a keenly-contested set fought out under a blazing sun on a court whose hard surface not only imparts a lightning speed

to the ball, but also forms an all-too efficient absorbent and reflector to the burning heat that at this time of the year pours down pitilessly upon it all day long. But 'le jeu vaut bien la chaleur!' More dissipation is provided to-night by a long tram-ride across the river to the People's Palace—a scene of mild and miscellaneous entertainment near the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, patronized almost entirely by the lower classes, where there are spacious grounds, whose circuit one may make as a passenger in the open cars of the most 'fiery and untamed' of miniature railway-trains, and where, as at the Aquarium, al fresco music and all sorts of side-shows are the chief attraction. The 'pièce de résistance' is, however, an enormous theatre, with sitting accommodation for 4,000 spectators. We find the place crowded on our arrival, but the behaviour of the multitude is a model of orderliness. In their simple-hearted society I discover the national equivalent for the American 'institution' of chewing-gum. At the big iron entrance-gates to the grounds are hawkers offering sunflower-seeds for sale. A kopeck will purchase a handful, and one sees folk everywhere persistently engaged in the not over-picturesque occupation of splitting up these seeds with their teeth, munching the sweet, soft kernels within, and spitting out the empty husks with a signal disregard for appearance or direction.

Wednesday, July 15th.

The weather has become much cooler, the morning being bright and blustery, with scudding cloud. It has been spent in a prolonged visit to the finest and most famous of Petrograd's sacred buildings—the Cathedral of St. Isaac. Externally, this grand edifice of granite and marble is very similar in appearance (though con-

siderably smaller in dimensions) to our London St. Paul's or the Roman St. Peter's; with this advantage, at least, over the former that, standing as it does in the centre of a vast open space, the exquisite symmetry of its proportions is visible from every side. It is built in the form of a Greek cross, with magnificent porticoes at its north and south entrances supported on a triple row of six huge columns, and surmounted by pediments representing in bronze bas-relief the Resurrection and the Adoration of the Magi: there are other pediments over the smaller porticoes at the east and west ends with scenes on them illustrative of the life of St. Isaac. The great central dome is of gilded bronze, and is surrounded by four lesser cupolas, beneath each of which there hangs a deep-toned bell. Inside, the Cathedral is disappointingly dark; so much so that much of the wonderful richness of the internal decorations is lost upon one—the polished walls with their array of immense mosaic pictures, the great pillars of malachite and lapis lazuli, the jewelled ikons, and the splendid sanctuary-screen of gilt, marble and bronze. Moreover the effect of the main part of the interior is very largely spoilt by a complicated system of iron stagings and scaffolding that reaches up to a great height from the floor into the dome—a precaution necessitated by structural trouble due to the sinking of the wooden pile foundations on which the great Cathedral took thirty-eight years in building at the cost of £2,500,000. In that latter connection of expenditure, there is one fact that is very early brought home to one during a sojourn in this country; that, however much ignorant critics may sneer at the Russian's religion as having too much of superstition and extravagant demonstrativeness in it, at any rate to the man himself it is just the most real and

vital and commanding thing in life. No occasion is inappropriate for the display of the faith that is in him. Not only at times of public worship, but continually throughout the day he is bearing witness by un-self-conscious signs and acts of devotion to his simple, honest piety of soul. You will see him, as in tram-car or on foot he passes a church or an ikon, cross himself repeatedly, while his lips move in silent supplication; even by the side of a busy, crowded street will he stop to prostrate himself before the shrine of some painted saint, and, quite oblivious of the hurrying passers-by, pour out his passionate, heartfelt prayer. And because of the deepness and the strength of this religious sense it is that he thinks no gift too great or too good to offer for the sake and honour of God. It is true that in Russia money is plentiful, but opulence does not by itself involve the possession of that spirit which makes people glad to surrender their wealth unstintingly to the glory and service of the divine. There is no truer test either of the sincerity of a man's beliefs or of the truth of his claim to devoutness than that of the extent of the sacrifices he finds himself instinctively placing on the altar of the religion he professes. And no one who has stood amazed, as I have, before the astounding costliness of the embellishment of the Russian churches—every bit of it, as a rule, the outcome of private munificence—can possibly doubt that in that land things are much indeed what they seem, and that its right to its proudest title, 'Holy Russia,' is founded on a fact there is no denying. I have already alluded to the summer-time exodus from Petrograd of the many fortunate ones who can afford the luxury of a 'datcha' by the sea or in one of the pretty rural districts lying beyond the suburbs. This afternoon my host gives me the welcome oppor-

tunity of making personal acquaintance with one of such country bungalows—his own—situate on the outskirts of a quaint little picturesque village called Mourino, some seven or eight miles from town. To parody the familiar words of the song, 'It's all right when you get there, but you've got to get there first!' Our destination is innocent of railway facilities, but the electric tram goes at least one-third of the way, and drops us with one change, at the end of an hour's run, at the hamlet of Les Noi, its terminus. Most excellent and invaluable things, by the way, those Petrograd trams, with their big, comfortable cars, and their wonderfully complete and wide-reaching system. There is hardly a spot in this city of long distances that one cannot reach by their means, and travel by them is extraordinarily cheap. In this connection of trams I heard an amusing story of their introduction into a certain township which shall be nameless that, as an illustration of Machiavellian official slimness, deserves to be placed on record. For its strict accordance with fact I am not in the least prepared to vouch, but, anyhow, 'si non è vero, è ben trovato.' When the engineering company approached the civic authorities in question with a view to obtaining permission to commence the work, leave was readily enough forthcoming, and contracts were entered upon by the unsuspecting concessionnaires, involving them in heavy financial penalties in the event of their agreement being unfulfilled by a specified date. Scarcely had a start been made of laying the lines in the streets than who should appear on the scenes but the police, with a peremptory demand for 'an explanation.' 'Oh! it's all right,' replied the firm's representative, 'we are doing this by full consent of the Town Council, and you ought to know it.' 'Ought we, indeed?' was the withering

rejoinder, 'anyhow, *we* have not been consulted in the matter, neither has *our* sanction been obtained. You will, therefore, be good enough to cease all work until further notice!' Result: a delay of some eighteen months, and the disbursement by the unfortunate contractors of large sums in fines, which, it is whispered, were promptly divided up (as per pre-arrangement) between the municipality and the police!

From Les Noi to Mourino is a drive over the most featureless flat country, and along a road characterized by only one thing worse than its wearisome straightness of direction, *viz*: its appalling state of disrepair. A somewhat heated argument with a bevy of 'izvóshtchiks' as to the legitimate fare results in our entrusting our safety to the only dróshky left on the scene at the end of the discussion—the most ruinous-looking compound of vehicle and horse that it is possible to imagine. That we only take one and a quarter hours in covering the five miles to our destination is less a matter of surprise than one of self-congratulation that we ever reach it whole in body at all. However, the pains and perils of the journey are speedily forgotten on arrival, and a delightfully refreshing five hours or so are divided between the hospitalities of the trim little wooden 'shanty,' and a long stroll through the beautiful wild-flowers and nodding grasses of the still uncut hayfields in the vicinity. The village boasts a Holy Well, round and over which a rude shrine has been erected. It lies at the bottom of a very steep hill, and one's heart cannot help going out in sympathetic pity to the relays of unfortunate little children, whose fate it is to toil time after time breathlessly up the rough, stiff gradient, with two heavy buckets full of water from the sacred spring dangling from their shoulders on a yoke. About sun-

down we start for home again in a local dróshky of, comparatively, commanding excellence; the only exciting incidents provided by the return trip being the erratic manœuvrings of the many country carts met en route, whose drivers are either asleep or intoxicated (or both). We pass one large lorry which through one or other of such familiar causes has left the roadway for the deep ditch at the edge, and is now lying on its side in a growing pool of mingled beer and paraffin. But nobody seems to mind, particularly the horses, who go on grazing unconcernedly, and the gentleman presumably in charge of them, whose slumbers the contretemps has entirely failed to interrupt. 'Nitchevó!' Perhaps I may add that at Mourino is the only golf links in the neighbourhood of Petrograd—quite a small affair of nine holes only. But this fact no doubt helps to account for the popularity of the place among the English Colony as a summer resort.

Thursday, July 16th.

Another lovely morning, hot and bright, with a refreshing breeze; just one of the sort that makes the necessity of an early rise a pleasure, not a penance. This is my first day on duty as English Chaplain, and I am responsible for the celebration of the Holy Communion, which is held every Thursday at 8.15. The congregation is but a thin one, most of the regular worshippers being away on their holidays, but some of those at the service to-day have, as I learn later, come long distances to attend it, an old gentleman of eighty, in particular. Not much amiss with the life of a Church with the presence in it of a spirit like that! After breakfast, a walk is imperative, if only in the hope of reducing the stiffness consequent on yesterday's painful

experience of a Russian country road. There is shopping to be done, and no better place for the purpose than the two fine streets of the Morskáya and the Nevsky Prospékt. From the Galérnaya two ways of reaching my destination offer themselves. The one—the more direct—by the shady Konno Gvardéiski Boulevard into St. Isaac's Square, out of which the Morskáya immediately opens, joining the Nevsky presently not far from its western end. The aforesaid Square contains not a few striking buildings, but there is one to which, in passing, special allusion may be made—the German Embassy; a great pile of pinkish-brown granite, in style, solid and severe to unsightliness, and surmounted on its long flat roof by a group of gigantic bronze figures. Before I am to leave Petrograd for home this forbidding-looking residence (the design of which, rumour has it, was practically forced upon the City authorities by the Kaiser himself) is to become the scene of a historic raid. For on the night that Germany declares war against Russia, an enormous mob pours into the Square, breaks its way into the Embassy —all of whose occupants have left it, save a hapless interpreter, who, sad to relate, meets his death at the hands of the infuriated crowd—throws all its furniture and ornaments (including a priceless collection of old china) out through the shattered windows on to the road beneath, and, having burnt everything that flames can destroy in an immense bonfire, hurls down all that can be uprooted of the Brobdignagian statuary from the parapet and consigns it amid tumultuous shoutings to a watery grave in the Móika Canal hard by! The alternative and pleasanter route to the Nevsky is along the riverside by the English Quay, and then to the right at the Dvortzóvi Bridge, through the Alexander

Gardens, with their wealth of bright flowers and cool, tree-shadowed walks. Here, as on the bridges, if one is not in a hurry, it is very interesting to sit awhile and watch the passing throng. Surely, there never was such a place as Russia for uniforms! Everybody seems to wear them; not the military only, but civil officials and students, and even schoolboys. And amid this moving medley of costumes more or less martial in design, there is one indispensable class of the feminine part of the community, whose elaborate gayness of distinctive apparel provides by no means the least conspicuous feature of the scene. The Russian wet-nurse is a gorgeous creature, indeed! When her charge is a boy her attire is blue; in the case of a girl it is pink: over this is thrown 'a white mantle, richly ornamented with silver tassels; and on the head is worn a diadem-shaped bonnet, known as the kokóshnik, adorned with imitation pearls and silver.' At the river-side entrance of these Alexander Gardens, by the way, stands a celebrated equestrian statue of Peter the Great, erected to his memory by Catherine II in 1782. Standing on a vast block of granite originally weighing 1500 tons—the identical block, it is said, on which Peter stood while watching a naval victory over the Swedes from the land at Lákhta in Finland—it 'represents the Emperor in the most impossible of positions, reining in his horse upon the very edge of a precipice, stretching out his hand towards the Nevá, and trampling on the enormous serpent of Conspiracy, which enables his rearing steed to stand by obligingly holding on to his tail!'* The ridiculous pretentiousness of this monument is in marked contrast to a much smaller one, altogether pleasing in its very simplicity, that, placed on the Quay

*A. J. C. Hare, 'Studies in Russia.'

a little farther north, depicts the first of the Tsars as quite a young man hard at work, with arms bared to the elbow, at his favourite occupation of boat-building. To enter the Nevsky Prospékt from the Alexander Gardens is but a step across the road that runs by their eastern outlet. Here we are in the longest and finest street in Petrograd. The most fashionable promenade in the City and its busiest commercial centre, it runs in a straight line for nearly three miles, and on a brilliant day like the present its spacious 'trottoirs' and broad wood-paved roadway present the liveliest of spectacles with jostling crowds of shoppers and strollers and a ceaseless procession of trams, carriages and motors. The last-named vehicles are a perfect terror. Apparently, there is no speed-limit prescribed or insisted on in Russia, and cars, big and little, tear up and down the streets at a break-neck pace, in complete disregard of the life or limbs of any hapless pedestrian who may chance to be in the way. The only mercy is that, compared with London or Paris, these rubber-tyred rockets are still the exception and not the rule.

There is one quaint Russian custom in connexion with shops that finds illustration, if not in so aristocratic a region as the Nevsky, at any rate in quarters less pronouncedly fashionable. The tradesman who wishes to draw public attention to the nature of his business and the variety of wares he has on sale, does so, not by the methods familiar to ourselves in England, but by very highly-coloured and realistic pictures of the goods in question painted on the outside walls of his premises. The butcher advertises the succulence of his steaks by portraits obviously drawn from life of the superb animals ruthlessly sacrificed to the requirements of his customers. Much the same type of 'tableau'

(with a suggested change of sex) is employed by the dairyman, who endeavours to convince you that 'there never were such cows' as those whose milk he has to sell. In this, at least from the pictorial standpoint, there is generally no difficulty in agreeing with him! At intervals along the same street, perhaps, there will be 'counterfeit presentments' of other commodities, eatable, drinkable, wearable, usable, each of its different kind so emphatically unique in quality and unprecedented in value that the wonder is how anyone can resist the temptation to go in and squander his all in their purchase. The reason for this artistic (?) outbreak is not far to seek. The education of the lower classes in Russia is conspicuous by its absence, and where written descriptions cannot, for lack of ability to read, be understood, pictures must of necessity take the place of unintelligible letters.

My description of the Nevsky must needs be a very meagre one, for this little record of daily doings has no intention of aping the guide-book. But, among many another notable building to be found on either side—churches of various denominations, palaces, banks, hotels, the City Hall, with its lofty tower used as a look-out station by the fire-brigade, the quaint, rambling bazaar of Gostíni Dvor, or the 'Strangers' Court'—there is one edifice so specially striking in appearance that it cannot be passed by without a word. It is the Kazán Cathedral—like nothing else so much, with its semi-circular colonnade and puny, glittering dome, as a ridiculous 'pocket edition' and caricature of St. Peter's at Rome. Inside, however, the great bare nave is dignified and effective, and worthy of remark, also, is the wonderful Ikonostás of solid silver, presented by the Don Cossacks after the war of 1812.

But the principal claims of the Cathedral to notoriety are two: it is a national museum of battle trophies—mostly, flags; and it is the shrine of a widely-celebrated holy picture, 'the Virgin of Kazán,' to which the faithful have for centuries attributed wonder-working powers. A service is being held as I enter this morning through a porch as usual crowded with wretched-looking beggars, but what sort of a service it is practically impossible for the uninitiated to discern. A dense mass of people is grouped in front of the chancel railings, within which is another smaller collection of folk, all standing—for chairs, like organs, are unknown in a Russian church. On the south side of the sanctuary is a small choir of men singing with magnificent voices a somewhat sweet and plaintive chant. Every now and then there is a pause in the music, during which the deep, resonant bass of one or other of the officiating priests is heard in lection or in prayer. The congregation have no share assigned them in public worship, but at the beginning and end of each prayer and every time the words 'Góspodi pomílui' ('Lord, have mercy upon us') are uttered, they cross themselves repeatedly, and, occasionally, incline themselves until their foreheads touch the ground. While the service is proceeding, there is an incessant movement in the body of the church of other folk who have come in for the purpose of their own devotions, and who either wander from ikon to ikon, offering up their petitions with much bowing and crossing and even kissings of the glass that covers each sacred painting, or else placing in one or other of the big holders that stand in front of the various shrines lighted tapers previously purchased at the stall near the entrance-door.

One thing in every Russian town very early attracts

a visitor's notice—the extraordinary number of pigeons that disport themselves on roof, on roadway and in public squares. As I come out of the Cathedral into the open plot on which it stands a woman appears at the door of a house hard by and throws on the ground a couple of handfuls of grain. Instantly, the air is noisy with the rush and clatter of wings, and a feathered cloud of, literally, hundreds of these birds descends as an avalanche upon the proffered meal, the late comers walking over their predecessors' backs and pecking right and left in a furious anxiety to secure their share. The reason for this offering on the part of the woman is the same as that which accounts for the privileged presence of the pigeon in such uncountable multitudes. He is regarded in Russia as the symbol of the Holy Ghost. To feed him is an act of piety; to neglect or hurt him would be an injury to the person of God Himself! Next to him in point of popularity, though far behind in sacredness, is the swallow: while most hated of all birds is the sparrow. Why this should be so is explained by a tradition current among the country folk that relates how 'before the Crucifixion the swallows carried off the nails provided for the use of the executioners, but the sparrows brought them back. And while our Lord was hanging upon the Cross the sparrows were maliciously exclaiming "Jif! Jif!"—"He is living! He is living!" in order to urge the tormentors to fresh cruelties. But the swallows cried, with opposite intent, "Umer! Umer!"—"He is dead! He is dead!" Therefore it is that to kill a swallow is a sin, and that his nest brings good luck to a house. But the sparrow is an unwelcome guest, whose entry into a cottage is a presage of woe. As a punishment for its sins its legs have been fastened together

by invisible bonds, and therefore it always hops, being unable to run.'*

Walking home, after lunch in one of the many restaurants with which the Nevsky abounds, I have my first view of a Russian funeral cortège; in this particular instance, quite a simple affair—a white coffin lying on an open bier hung with white trappings and furnished with four curious upright posts at each end. But in the case of the wealthier classes, the arrangements on such occasions are sometimes elaborate almost to grotesqueness. A huge hearse, fitted with a high white canopy, and decked with heavy draperies of the same colour, is drawn slowly along the streets by four white horses covered with trailing white network. By the side of this imposing car four men walk, two at the front and two at the back, while, preceding them, are four to six others, holding in their hands lit lamps somewhat similar in appearance to those ordinarily in use on carriages —all these attendants being dressed in light greyish-yellow tail-coat suits, with tall hats of an identical hue to complete the quaint ensemble! The remainder of the day is passed in the strenuous relaxation of lawn-tennis at the English Club, and self-acquittal, after dinner, of that first and pleasantest, even if the most exacting, of every traveller's duties—the writing of letters home.

Friday, July 17th.

In the night the weather has changed considerably, and this morning is grey and cold and scowling, with but rare gleams of sun and the most boisterous of winds. Blow it can, too, in Petrograd; the country in the immediate vicinity, being as flat as the proverbial

* A. J. C. Hare, 'Studies in Russia.'

pancake and practically treeless, offers no protection whatever from the blast, and an autumn gale from the north is a thing of searching chill and tempestuous violence best avoided indoors. However, I am due to pick up a friend at the British Embassy and go out with him to lunch in his flat on the Kámenostrovski Prospékt on the other (right) side of the Nevá, so, willy nilly, 'rude Boreas' must be faced afoot. It is more sheltered among the big houses that lie away back from the quays, so I strike 'inland,' and find my way by the Galérnaya and the back of the Alexander Gardens into the great Dvortzóvaya Square, on the north side of which stands the imposing red façade of the Winter Palace. The royal yellow standard with its black eagle device is flying from the roof-flagstaff today as a sign that the Tsar is at home in his Capital; so that even if there were time to view the many interesting sights of this immense, historic pile (and permission to do so is generally obtainable on presentation of passport), the visit would be out of the question just now. Midway between the vast bulk of the Imperial residence—the scene of the last moments of the broken-hearted Nicholas I and of his son, the foully-murdered Alexander II—and the lofty triumphal archway that opens through the crescent-shaped buildings in which the General Staff have their head-quarters into the Morskáya and the Nevsky Prospékt, there stands the towering Alexander Column, an enormous monolith of red granite, placed there in 1834 by Nicholas I in memory of his brother. Relative to its erection an amusing story is told. The Tsar, having decided to put up the monument, gave orders to the Finnish quarries that a single pillar of stone of not less than a certain size should at any cost be obtained. A long

interval ensued, in which nothing was heard of any progress in the execution of the royal command, and the Emperor, growing impatient at the delay, caused inquiries to be made as to what was being done. The answer came back that the stone had been found, but it was bigger than the measurements prescribed; it would, however, be delivered immediately the workmen had finished *sawing it off to the proper length*! With what punishment these unhappy masons were visited for their stupidity, and what were the original dimensions of the block they so well-meaningly curtailed, history does not relate. But, considering that the height of the memorial as it now stands is something like a hundred and fifty-four feet, the mass of granite as at first cut out of the quarry must, surely, have constituted a modern record for magnitude. Situated just beyond the Winter Palace eastward, and linked to it by a Venetian-looking flying bridge is the famous Hermitage, a big, ponderous building of grey granite, with a most striking portico supported on the shoulders of ten gigantic half-nude figures. Erected as a palace by Catherine II, it now contains the Tsar's private collection of antiquities, gems and pictures. Wet days need have no terror for the visitor to Petrograd, who has a haven of delight like this practically always open to him; and weeks of assiduous inspection may be spent here before one can form any conception of the amazing wealth, variety and interest of the art treasures, ancient and modern alike, assembled in its galleries and rooms. But the temptation to enter just now has to be resisted, and I must hurry along the Milliónnaya, with its palaces and barracks, past the Márs ovo Pole, the great, bare military parade-ground, to my destination at the end of the Tróitzki Bridge hard by. Whatever

there may be said in favour of the interior arrangements of the British Embassy, and of some fine apartments this one-time palace can certainly boast—notably, the ball- and dining-rooms and the Ambassador's private sanctum—it is difficult to be enthusiastic over the depressing, barrack-like appearance of its outside. One thing, however, I am to discover about it ere long; that the deep crimson colouring of its walls is suggestively emblematic of the warm-hearted friendliness of its distinguished occupants. Of no feature of my stay in Petrograd do I cherish more delightful and grateful memories than the cordial welcome extended to me by Sir George Buchanan and his wife; the charm of their respective personalities, the happiness of the home life into which I was allowed admittance, and the generousness of the hospitality it was constantly my good fortune to enjoy. At the Embassy I find my friend—one of the diplomatic staff—awaiting me, and a longish drive brings us to his pretty flat, where a most recherché little luncheon 'à la russe' invites attention. They are having busy times at the Chancellery just now, so my host has soon to return to his official labours. On my way home by tram I am introduced by the conductor thereof to the meaning of certain mysterious words painted up in his car, 'Kurénie tabaká vospresht-cháetsya'—the interpretation being forced upon me by much emphatic pointing on his part to a lighted cigarette that betrays its smouldering presence between my fingers. It seems strange that 'smoking' should be 'forbidden' anywhere in Russia; for, surely, there is no country in the world more universally addicted to tobacco. The women no less than the men are hardened sinners in this respect, even to the extent of indulging their hobby in between the various courses of

a meal. Fortunately, the fragrant weed—most of which is home-grown, in South Russia and the Caucasus—is of the mildest description, and the cigarettes so incessantly consumed are, two thirds, cardboard mouthpiece; so, little harm is done. These 'papirósi' are quite reasonable in price; one can buy a box of a hundred of excellent quality for 1½ to 2 roubles (*i.e.*, from 3s. to 4s.); but one gets thoroughly tired of their comparative characterlessness of flavour. Foreign tobacco, by the way—particularly cigars—is ridiculously expensive. A man in the Nevsky had the impertinence to ask me 2s. 6d. for a packet of 25 Player's 'Navy Cut' cigarettes, and pretended to be quite incredulous when I told him what I should have to pay for the same in England. However, in spite of his professed unbelief, he insisted on taking down all his stock of imported cigarettes from his shop-shelves, and requesting me to mark them with the London prices. I hope in the effort to do so patriotically I did not call unduly on my imagination, but the general impression I had of his attitude when I had finished was that it would not take much to persuade him as a confirmed smoker to become a naturalized Briton!

I suppose that most people who try to give themselves some idea of the topography of Petrograd, and who do so without the aid of a large scale map, picture the place as a big, wide-spreading City with a broad river running through it seawards and roughly dividing it into two equal portions. So far the description will hold fairly well; at the same time, in one respect, it is erroneous, and, in another, inadequate. To start with, the Nevá, about half way along its course through Petrograd, becomes not one but three; the main current, which runs N. and S.W. trending away in two

separate directions towards the N. and N.W., and being again subdivided in that region into lesser streams which eventually find their way into the Gulf of Finland. This accounts, in the second place, for the striking difference between the characteristics of the land on its left bank and those of that on its right. The left bank, where the chief part of the city lies, may be regarded as the mainland, its continuity being broken only here and there by narrow artificial canals. The right bank, however, consists entirely of islands, many quite insignificant in size, but (leaving out the Vasíli Óstrov) five, linked together by bridges, being of considerable dimensions, *viz;* Aptékarski, Kámenni, Yelágin, Krestóvski and Petróvski. These islands, particularly the more northerly of the group, are the beauty spots and pleasure grounds of Petrograd. Among their well-wooded parks and picturesque walks are many dátchas of the richer citizens; and, although in the storms of winter and spring liable to inundation owing to the low level of their shores, yet in the burning summer, with their green swards and shady avenues and cool sea breezes, they offer the most delightful and easily accessible of refuges from the noise and stress of town life and the stifling, sun-baked streets. One can reach them either by tram or steamer, and by all means select the latter more leisurely mode of conveyance, if you do not mind sitting cramped up for an hour or so in the midst of a light-hearted, chattering holiday crowd, and are of the sort to be interested in the ever-shifting pageant of the busy river. The wind that made this morning so tempestuous drops about tea-time, and, though the sky is grey and sullen, still the weather conditions do not look too unpromising this afternoon for just such a trip as I am recommending. Our little

party is soon made up: its destination, Krestóvski, the most western of the islands; the special allurement, the prospect of a dinner at the Imperial Yacht Club, of which select establishment my host has the entrée. Starting from the 'embarcardère' of the Summer Gardens (just below the British Embassy), the run before us is some four miles, made, however, considerably longer by continual zigzagging across the river for the purpose of calling at the various piers en route. Gradually the domes and chimneys and gaunt water-side warehouses of Petrograd slip astern, and the scenery becomes increasingly open and countrified, until, leaving the hamlet of Nóvaya Derévnya on the right, we pass between Kámenni and Yelágin, find ourselves in the narrow channel of the Srédnyaya Nevá, and, ere many moments have elapsed, alongside the pretty little landing-stage of Krestóvski. The Yacht Club being about a half-mile further on, we foolishly resist the importunities of a fleet of dróshky-drivers, and cover the distance on foot, involving ourselves thereby in a sea of indescribable mud. Dinner ordered, we stroll about in the trim gardens that surround the attractive, wood-built premises of the Club until it is announced, while heavy black clouds are ominously banking up from the north-west, and a raw wind begins to whistle through the pine-trees and ruffle the surface of the water just beyond. Hardly are we seated at our table on the broad, covered terrace that runs the whole length of the building than with the roar of a hurricane and in sheets of blinding, driving scud the threatened storm bursts forth, and dinners, diners, waiters, chairs and tables are in the twinkling of an eye sent flying here, there and everywhere by the sheer force of the squall. Did ever thunder boom more loudly, or light-

nings flash more bright? Did ever clouds empty themselves in such an anger of torrential downpour? Or gale wrestle more furiously amid the groaning, bending pines? Or did ever drenched and battered guests try more cheerfully to make the best of a bad job as, in semi-darkness, they consume the remains of their spoilt and scattered meal indoors, while the house rocks to the bombardment of the headlong gusts, and the shot-like volleys of horizontal rain drum against the streaming windows? I know not; but there are some situations so ridiculously tragic that laughter is the only thing left. If you can only bring yourself to see it so, there is something exquisitely humorous even in a dish of water-logged meat or in vegetables that bear obvious traces of having been with difficulty collected from a damp and sandy floor! Anyhow, on the present occasion, it is a very merry party that gropes for its rescued victuals in the gloom, and the reward of unquenchably good spirits is not long in forthcoming in the shape of a cessation of the tempest almost as instantaneous and unexpected as its advent. In front of the Club-house, and stretching seawards along the near river-bank, is moored a long line of members' yachts and motor-boats; a rough pathway leading beyond them to a point where a look-out station provides an extensive view of the Finnish Gulf. This evening, in the mysterious, sickly glow that has followed the passing of the inky storm-clouds, the aspect of that heaving expanse of burnished waters is indeed a striking one; a low sweep of coast-line on the right showing faintly through the haze, while, to the left, the island fortress of Cronstadt sits, a blue-grey wraith, on the shimmering horizon, the last rays of the sinking sun reflected as a dully-burning point of light from the

great gilded dome of its Cathedral. 'The shades of night' are 'falling fast' before we start to splash back along the swimming roads to catch the last boat from Krestóvski pier, but by the time we reach Nóvaya Derévnaya the sky has again become so menacingly overcast that, fearing a repetition of the afternoon's experience, we prudently disembark and finish the long journey home by tram.

Saturday, July 18th.

A heavy, sultry morning after a wild and noisy night. About 2 a.m. another thunderstorm commenced artillery practice overhead, making sleep impossible during hours of riotous hubbub. As I go out after breakfast into the soaking, steaming streets, shod only in our casual English way, I notice that many even of the men I meet are wearing goloshes. The Russian is a curious contradiction. As regards the dependence of his health on the observance of the simplest sanitary precautions he is frankly and foolishly indifferent. But there is one thing he will not do, if he can help it: he will not catch an unnecessary cold. Therefore it is that he is not only exceedingly particular about warm wrappings for his body, but also pathetically nervous about the danger of fresh air. I remember one stifling day venturing to open by ever so little the door of the tram-car in which I was riding in a desperate effort to save myself from asphyxiation, when a herculean officer sitting next to me, clad, as usual, in a thick military overcoat, fixed me with his glittering eye, said something quite unintelligible in sound but obvious in meaning, solemnly rose and shut the door with a bang, and stood there in front of the handle to prevent any further attempts on my part on the well-being of his fellow

countrymen! For this same reason of nervous carefulness the Russian shrinks from the risk of wet feet. On the slightest provocation he will don his 'gums,' and that he is not altogether unjustified in doing so all will agree who are familiar with the condition of the footwalks in his cities when rain is falling. It is not only that their wretched state of dilapidation makes them practically a continuous chain of puddles, but there is an even more prolific source of trouble yet. The Russian architect has every now and then a playful way of finishing off the stack-pipes of his buildings about two feet short of the ground, and of terminating them with an elbow pointing directly outward; the result being that the roof-drainage, instead of being carried away underground as it is in England, is spouted out in a cascade on to the very centre of the pathway, inundating the pavements with streams of running water.

A note of tragedy has lately been struck in our English Colony. A few days ago a fine young fellow, employed at one of the many mills in Petrograd, went out to bathe in the New Port, was seized with cramp, and disappeared before rescue was possible. Failing the discovery of the body, I had arranged, at the wish of his friends and fellow employés, to hold a memorial service in church. Just as the congregation are assembling the news comes in that the poor drowned lad has been found, but that the police refuse to hand over the remains until they are satisfied as to the cause of death. So there is nothing to do but to cancel the service, dismiss the mourners, and wait until permission is granted by the authorities to proceed with the funeral. This official reluctance to surrender the body of one who has died in such circumstances is readily explainable. The annual number of suicides in Petrograd, and of

violent ends not self-sought, is astonishingly large, and mainly responsible for cases of both kinds are (or were) drink and dissipation. In one cemetery that I visited outside the City district, a considerable portion was expressly set aside for the burial of those poor creatures, who, 'mad from life's history, into death's mystery' had been glad 'to be hurled,' and, out of the hundreds of sorry graves that represented but one year's contribution to the clutches of Giant Despair, by far the larger proportion were those of women. And thereto hangs the tale of a social evil which need not be further particularized. It is, however, a significant fact that, as I am given to understand, the profits made on all the cards sold at the various high-class Clubs go to the upkeep not of orphan institutions alone, but of those as well that have been established for the maintenance of illegitimate children.

There is one sacred building in Petrograd which everyone must go and see, not only because of its architectural interest, but also, and especially, by reason of the historic tragedy commemorated by its erection—the Khram Voskreséniya Khristóva, or the Church of the Resurrection of Christ. To find it one turns to the left off the Nevsky after crossing the Kazánski Bridge, and follows the line of the Yekaterinínski Canal, at the edge of which it stands, on the exact spot where the Tsar Alexander II was mortally wounded by a Nihilist bomb on March 13th, 1881. The external appearance of the Church perhaps hardly commends itself to Western taste, being flamboyant in style and aggressively extravagant in colouring. The group of cupolas that surmount it is built of enamelled bricks, gaudy beyond words with their kaleidoscopic patchwork of blues and greens and whites. Inside, the proportions

are remarkably good; the walls being covered with splendid mosaics illustrating scenes in the life of Christ, and, while the minor sanctuary-screens are constructed of the richest and rarest Siberian marbles, the main Ikonostás is of solid silver, set with pictures in enamel. At the west end, under the belfry, is incorporated into the Church the actual site of the outrage; the cobble pavé, stone kerbing and iron railings of the Canal being left precisely as they were after the fatal explosion, and are overshadowed by a canopy borne upon four pillars of jasper. Unhappy Emperor! It was the least thing that Russia could do after his pitiful end to raise a monument that should perpetuate his country's shame no less than his country's gratitude. Perhaps it was, after all, only consistent with the way of the world in all the ages that this benefactor of his race—the 'Tsar libérateur'—who at one stroke of the pen changed the lot of twenty-three millions of his subjects from virtual slavery to industrial freedom should perish thus by an assassin's hand after four previous attempts upon his life!

The question of meals away from home is one very easily settled in Russia. In all the big towns restaurants of all classes abound; the prices of those of the first order ranging very high, while in establishments of a less pretentious kind excellent food is obtainable at quite reasonable charges. At one of these latter resorts which I frequently visited—the 'Vienna'—(now the 'Belgrade'), one could dine not only sufficiently but sumptuously for little more than a rouble. The story is, I believe, told of America that the 'pourboire' system there is so unescapably attached even to the smallest services rendered that one cannot so much as wash one's hands without becoming aware of the

suggestive legend, 'Please tip the basin after using!' But the tale might equally apply to Russia, and the imposition represents a serious addition to the cost of one's repasts. It is possible, however, to avoid much of the expense incidental to the patronage of restaurants by betaking oneself to one of the many shops where 'snacks' (zakúskas) in the form of meat or fish or cheese sandwiches are cheaply purchasable, to be eaten at the counter. More properly speaking, 'zakúska' means a 'hors d'oeuvre,' and the word recalls a peculiarity of cuisine that is common to restaurants and hotels in Russia and Sweden alike. In the latter country it is known as the 'smörgåsbord,' and consists of a sideboard laden with all manner of weird and tasty relishes, at which, after the meal proper has been ordered, one is expected to go and pick as a kind of 'preliminary canter' with appetite. At first it is a sight that is irresistibly laughable to see grown men and women hovering with intensely serious faces around the tit-bit covered table, forking on to a plate a miscellaneous assortment of whatever dainties may appeal—not forgetting a big slice of bread and a pat of butter—and then returning with the gleanings to their seat, where all speedily disappears with the stimulating aid of a glass of vódka! This extra refreshment, by the way, is not 'thrown in,' as the bill very soon discloses. In the summer the Russian likes his evening meal out of doors, and in Petrograd he has ample opportunity of indulging his fancy. To-night a friend and I make our way to a great favourite among these 'al fresco' dining-gardens—that of Contant, in the Móika—and with much difficulty find a vacant table. The gravelled, tree-shaded grounds at the back of the restaurant buildings are crowded with guests, a large

proportion of whom are officers, and a lively, uniformed band is discoursing English tunes from a raised dais at the side. The day finishes with a call at the New English Club in the Morskáya, where we have the privilege of paying the equivalent to 2s. 8d. for a couple of whiskeys and sodas. 'Il faut souffrir pour être patriote!'

Sunday, July 19th.

Another exquisite day, even though the temperature still errs on the side of excess. My Chaplain's duties have kept me busy this morning from an early hour, and it is nearly lunch-time before the last service of the day is over—no Evensong being held during the summer months. In this clerical connexion a passing word as to my brother priests of the Russian Church may not be out of place. They consist of two entirely distinct classes, the 'Black' Clergy, or Monks of the order of St. Basil, who 'represent the Greek tradition,' and in whose hands lies the whole of the ecclesiastical administration; and the 'White,' or secular and married Clergy, whose ranks furnish the parish priests of the land. These latter are, as a rule, miserably poor, being practically dependent for a living on the fees which they can succeed in extracting from the pockets of their flock. The title 'White' as applied to them is a somewhat ironical misnomer; for neither in the colour of their dress nor, I regret to say, more than often, in the general appearance of their persons do they seem to make any effort to associate themselves with the implication of the adjective. We English clergy have, I believe, the reputation, not always undeserved, of being the worst dressed members of the com-

munity. Certainly, if the standard of costume expected of us is that immaculate spruceness of attire pictured in the illustrated advertisements of the clerical tailors, most of us must needs own to the soft impeachment of being considerably 'below par,' both in style and condition of apparel. But a visit to Russia should supply the least adequately clad of us with reasons for self-satisfaction. No English parson, however impoverished, or indifferent to his personal aspect, would dream of garbing himself in clothes so shabby and so unforgiveably dirty as those frequently worn by his Russian brother—the heavily-bearded face surmounted by a rusty black hard felt hat, beneath which shaggy locks descend well on to the shoulders; the rest of the body being concealed by a long 'soutane' or cassock, generally of some shade of grey or brown, and in varying stages of fadedness and soil. However, in spite of such sartorial shortcomings, the men are, I fancy, as a rule, worthy fellows enough; not very highly educated, perhaps, but sufficiently so for the main duty of their calling, which is not primarily one of teaching (sermons are very seldom preached in a Russian church), but, more particularly, that of officiating at innumerable public services. They have, however, one natural endowment, for whose possession their English confrères may well envy them. Their voices are magnificent, and would make their owners' fortunes in a different walk in life.

There is one characteristic of Russian life that has a good deal to recommend it; its large number of public holidays. There are twenty-seven of the kind in the year, not religious festivals alone—although these, naturally, predominate—but also (ten of them) commemorations of name-days and other anniversaries connected with

the Imperial family. One day in each week, besides, provides opportunities of leisure and pleasure, of which the multitude take advantage to the full. On Sundays, every one 'does something,' and to do it gets as far away from his normal surroundings as possible. Trams, river-steamers and trains are crowded with folk en route for the country or the sea-side, and this afternoon a friend and I resolve to join a large section of them in one of their favourite excursions, and visit the Tsar's beautiful park and palace at Peterhóf, a railway run of some eighteen miles from the Baltic station. It is a long and dusty, but quite pretty, walk from the train to the outskirts of the imperial demesne, but the tramp is well repaid on arrival by the extraordinary picturesqueness of the scenery, both natural and artificial, that greets the eye. Great plantations of pines intersected by shady paths; a big, placid lake reflecting the grateful shadows of the trees that grow all round up to its very edge; narrow canals crossed here and there by neat little bridges: wide stretches of moorland, marked out in one place as a track for horse-racing; in the depths of the woods, noisy waterfalls tumbling down long series of stone steps, and soaring fountains plashing back into fretted pools, the thin smoke of their spray drifting away in clouds over the quaint temple-like summer-houses built near by. Truly a delicious spot wherein to pass the hours of a blazing afternoon! And so in this charm of sight and sound one saunters on, until at length the main object of one's visit, the Imperial Palace itself, stands out to view, its long red and white façade magnificently situated on a terrace that crowns a considerable eminence and commands wonderful views of Cronstadt and the distant Finnish Gulf. In front of it, down a

steep flight of coloured marble steps, flanked on either side by gilded statues, a foaming cascade precipitates itself into a basin below, where there is a curious fountain in the form of an immense figure of Samson forcing open the jaws of a lion. The Tsar is spending his Sunday at Peterhóf to-day, admission to the Palace being, therefore, out of the question: so we must content ourselves, as do the rest of our swarming fellow-trippers, with strolling about the grounds of this Russian Versailles, and resting by the boulder-strewn edge of the perfectly calm sea, until it is time to be making a move if we are to catch our return-train. A dróshky is conveniently disengaged on the Terrace, and brings us to the Station with time to spare for a much-needed 'stakán chai' (glass of tea), and in less than an hour we are back again in the stuffy streets of Petrograd. To-night, while dining in the Solovyóv Restaurant in the Nevsky we hear the first rumours of an industrial trouble that is ere long to assume very serious proportions: the Labour leaders in Petrograd having decided to proclaim a general strike. Various reasons (non-political, at first) are assigned for this determination. Among others, that (1) it is intended as a demonstration of sympathy with their fellow-workers in Batúm and Bakú, whose recent risng against their employers resulted in the summary execution of the ringleaders; and that (2) it has been organized by the French Socialists of Paris in hopes of spoiling the visit of the President of the Republic to the Tsar—a three days' sojourn, due to begin to-morrow by a formal reception at Cronstadt, of whose object, it is said, they strongly disapprove. It is not until some ten days later that the real explanation of the matter is furnished by the arrest in Petrograd of

some of the prominent German manufacturers of the City on the charge of having both provoked the strike and provided funds for its carrying out—for reasons that events almost immediately subsequent make sufficiently intelligible. Anyhow, this evening, there is no sign whatever of the coming struggle, and the streets are gay with flags in honour of—as I read on one of them—'La belle France, amie et alliée.'

Monday, July 20th.

Weather still unbrokenly fine, a gentle breeze making the heat somewhat more endurable. I am sent for early this morning to go and administer the Holy Communion to a sick English lady who has been taken to one of the municipal Hospitals for women, of which the name only is sent to me, and nothing said as to whereabouts. 'Nitchevó!' Take a dróshky, and leave it to the driver! The Clerk of the English Church, who speaks Russian well, and whom I take with me, shall do all the necessary asking and explaining. He does so during the course of an hour's aimless drive, in which dozens of 'izvóshtchiks' and passers-by are anxiously questioned, but with no result whatever, until quite by accident we stumble on the very place we want far out in the suburbs—a big, forbidding structure situate amid the most poverty-stricken surroundings, in a street of unimaginable mud and holes. On demanding entrance at the door, a difficulty arises. No 'Anglíski svyashtchénnik' (English clergyman) has ever, so we are told, visited the place before. But the sight of my clerical robes and collar, added to the fact that in Russia nothing is ever refused to 'Religion,' whether orthodox or otherwise, soon settles the ques-

tion of admittance, and I am taken into the Matron's private sitting-room to don my canonicals, while a nurse hurries into the ward where my patient is lying to make the necessary preparations and to tell the other inmates what is about to take place. It is a long, low, white-washed room into which I am escorted, full of beds, of which each one is occupied; suffocatingly hot and 'smelly,' and positively swarming with flies. I take the service by the invalid's bedside, and am both struck and touched by noticing that from beginning to end of my ministrations every single one of the other patients is sitting up in bed, and following my words and actions with signs of reverent interest. That these poor sufferers have understood something of the blessing I give them before leaving, even if it be only through the suggestiveness of my upraised hand, I should like to believe: anyhow, as I pass along the line of beds on my way out of the ward, every head is bowed in sympathetic farewell.

As we drive back from the Hospital through the slums it is evident enough that last night's whispers about a coming strike were only too well founded upon fact. On roadways, on bridges, on the the banks of the canals, masses of rough-looking men, with their women-kind in attendance, are congregated, and many an unfriendly eye is turned in our direction as our 'izvóshtchik' slowly pilots his dróshky through a sea of sullen faces. Moreover, the vódka shops in the neighbourhood are doing a thriving business, with the inevitable result of angry altercations, and not a few free fights, among their customers. We are thankful to pass unscathed through this zone of discontent and raw-edged temper, and are not surprised when we hear that but an hour or so later in the afternoon the

threatened outbreak has begun. Great roaring, singing crowds sweep in City-wards from the outlying districts like a torrent in spate, and seem as if they must carry all before them by the sheer weight of their serried multitudes. As they pass through the suburbs they leave a trail of considerable havoc in their wake in the shape of broken windows and wrecked tram-cars, but their hope of doing damage in the more central parts of the town is doomed to disappointment. Not only are the police awaiting their arrival, but troops have been stationed at the most likely spots, ready to deal with them as circumstances require. In spite of all such precautions, however, stray bands do manage here and there to get through the cordon: only, eventually, to be sorry for their success. To-night I have dined with friends at the Hôtel de l'Europe in the Nevsky, and while walking home about 11 p.m. I see a sight which can only be witnessed in Russia—a 'coup de theâtre' of the most thrilling and dramatic order. Just in front of me, with an indescribable hubbub of voices and tramping of feet, there suddenly appear the leading ranks of a large body of strikers, emerging on to the Nevsky out of a side-street on the right. Hurrah! They are masters of the situation! Now for some fun! Brief moment of exultation! Indeed, scarcely a moment. For like a flash of lightning a company of Cossacks that has been lying in wait for its prey in another side-street exactly opposite is out upon them at full gallop, and drives them back, scattered and yelling, down the same way by which they have come. It is not until one has seen the Cossack in action like this that one can appreciate the terror he universally inspires. His ordinary appearance as he trots past you with his regiment along the peaceful streets has nothing in the least

intimidating about it. You catch a glimpse of a pair of bright, black eyes set in a rather small, determined-looking face, and of a little wiry figure, clad in the simplest of uniforms, and poised on the saddle in such a manner as stamps its owner the born horseman that he is. But put that man to the business he loves more than all else in life, and he becomes a demon incarnate. Utterly fearless himself, he is also sublimely indifferent to the consequences for others when once he has received his orders and his head is down and his blood is up. To treat a Russian crowd that has got out of hand by the ordinary methods of mob-control would be something almost as foolish and unavailing as Mrs. Partington's attempt to keep back the waters of the Atlantic with a broom. There is only one recognized and really effective remedy for the rioter—a whirlwind charge of these wild and ruthless tribesmen from the Don or the Ural Mountains. The weapon on which they chiefly rely for impressing on aggressive insubordination both the folly of menace and the wisdom of an early retreat is the 'nagáika,' a whip with weighted thongs, with which terrible wounds can be inflicted on the face and head. But to-night I hear that in certain distant quarters of the City the attitude of the mob has been so dangerously defiant that recourse by the soldiery to fire-arms has been necessitated. In spite of these disturbances, however, the ceremony of M. Poincaré's reception by the Tsar at Cronstadt has gone off this afternoon with great éclat, and one could distinctly hear the thudding boom of the great war-ships' guns as, twenty-five miles away, they fired their salutes of welcome. Yet, somehow or other, so I am told, there does not seem that spirit of excited anticipation abroad among the public that marked the arrival on June 28th

of the British Battle Cruiser Squadron under Rear-Admiral Beatty. During that visit Petrograd went perfectly mad, and Jack Tar, fêted and fussed over at every turn, became the spoilt darling of the most impulsively-affectionate and hospitable people in the world.

Tuesday, July 21st.

The weather is still gloriously fine, and the heat continues with unrelenting oppressiveness. Yesterday afternoon, the police having at last surrendered the body of the young Englishman recently drowned, I read the first part of the Burial Service over the coffin in Church in the presence of a large congregation of friends and sympathizers. To-day I am to complete my sad duty by laying the remains to rest in the great cemetery at Uspénski, a journey of some three-quarters of an hour from Petrograd on the Finland railway. Every morning a funeral train leaves a small station near the City terminus of that line at 10 a.m., the front part of it composed of carriages for the use of mourners and holiday-makers (for Uspénski is largely resorted to for that latter purpose), and the end half of vans, crammed from floor to roof with coffins. It is a long drive from the Galérnaya to the Viborg quarter in which the station is situate, and, as the Church clerk and I cross the Alexándrovski Bridge that leads across the Nevá into that very rough and unattractive district, we hear that there has just taken place a battle royal between Cossacks and strikers, in which not a few of the latter have lost their lives, guns and pistols being freely used on both sides. Nothing remains to tell the tale of the fight, except the significant fact that armed soldiery are everywhere, and not another soul is to be

seen in the streets. On arriving at Uspénski, which lies off the main Finland line, and is in reality just a big pine-forest, in whose mingled shadow and sunshine there lie thousands and thousands of graves set in orderly rows amid a profusion of wild flowers, the passengers descend first, and wait reverently at the side of the long, narrow platform while the vans are unloaded of their sad freight, and coffin after coffin is carried past them by gangs of men in overalls, to be piled one above the other on carts, and taken to the chapel hard by where the funeral rites will be performed. I go to the little waiting room to put on my robes (including a heavy cope of black velvet trimmed with silver—an insufferable burden to the flesh on a day of such tropical heat), and take my place at the edge of the crowd. That pitiful, ghastly procession of coffins! I shall never forget it. All sizes and all sorts, from those of tiny babies onwards: most of them, where means could afford it, quite respectable in appearance, and each one with a little ikon slipped in under the strip of lace that runs from end to end. But others there are of which I shrink to tell; just rough wooden shells, seemingly nailed together anyhow, whose lids make no pretence of fitting, and from which issues an effluvium simply unspeakably dreadful. In these are the bodies of paupers or of those who, 'found dead,' have been taken to the Morgue at Petrograd to await the chance of being claimed before being buried at the municipal expense. Indeed, so appalling is the condition of one batch of these nameless coffins that the priest refuses to allow them to be brought with the others into the Chapel, but, with splendid devotion to duty, enters the van where they are stacked, and, while he and his assistant swing a couple of smok-

ing censers in self-defence amid the stench of that awful atmosphere, reads the service over them there. At last our own little cortège is ready, and, after the train has backed out of the station, we cross the line and follow the prettiest of little woodland paths to where, presumably, the grave has been already prepared. But, on arriving at the spot, we find the diggers still busy with their toil, and here a thing happens which anywhere else but in Russia would be considered an unforgiveable scandal. The bearers of the coffin lay down their load on the sloping edge of the track, take off their coats, and, seizing spade and pick, set to work with a will to complete the unfinished excavation, while the mourners look on aghast, and a beggar-woman takes the opportunity of pulling my cope from behind and soliciting an alms which she does not get! The brief service over, I walk slowly back to the station, noting as I do so, with something of a shock, one curious practice in connection with the recognized use of a family resting-place. Round each of such large graves there run iron railings fitted with a gate; inside the enclosure the ground is paved or cemented, and on it are placed an ordinary flap-table and one or more garden-seats. Here the near relatives of the deceased who are paying a holiday visit to the Cemetery resort at meal-times, seating themselves on the benches so conveniently provided, and doing full justice to the repast that, in all the simplicity of its paper wrappings, is spread before the party on the table! There are not a few thus enjoying themselves this afternoon as I pass wonderingly by. There being no train on this little branch railway for two hours or so, we hire a dróshky, and, excepting for the thick dust, which in places is well up to the axles, and invades every corner of the

carriage, have a very pleasant drive through the sombre woods and along the flat, open countryside to Párgolovo, a pretty little village some two miles distant and on the main line, where a homeward-bound 'póyest' is soon forthcoming. We find on our return the streets very lively in honour of the French visit, and full not only of surging crowds all agog to see the decorations but also of police and soldiery, who are keeping a wide eye open for any signs of mischief-making on the part of the strikers. After tea I walk down to the Nevá in hopes that some of the French war-ships, as lately a Dutch cruiser, the 'Zeeland,' has been, may be anchored below the Nikoláevski Bridge, but, unfortunately, the bigger vessels have preferred to remain at the New Port, and the navy of the Republic is only represented by two or three smart-looking destroyers, surrounded, of course, by boatfuls of interested and inquisitive sight-seers, and being gazed at from the Quays and Bridge by multitudes that block the very roadways. As I stand on the fringe of the restless throng two girls rush up to me in great excitement and insist on annexing my services in a matter of urgent need. They are English—'sheep' in this strange, uproarious city up to now 'without a shepherd'—and my clerical collar suddenly espied becomes to them a veritable star of hope! 'Oh, please, are you the British Chaplain?' 'Yes?' 'Then do be so good as to help us to find the steamer, by which we are to sail for England to-night!' From such pathetic beseeching escape is impossible, and practically the whole length of the river-side docks is investigated and questioned, until at last, after some two hours of strenuous enquiry and fruitless journeyings from pillar to post, we hear that the boat we are in search of is lying off the Port, some distance down-

stream, and the damsels depart rejoicingly thitherwards in a launch. I recount this little episode, because it serves to recall a fact, of the extent of whose relation to this part of the world I certainly had no previous idea. These two young women were governesses. Quite alone each had come out from England—one, to a situation far down in South Russia; the other, to join a family in Moscow—and quite alone, too, (for it was only the chance of the same quest that had brought them together in Petrograd), they were travelling back: and they thought nothing of it! And their case represents hundreds of others. Russia is full of these plucky, enterprising, independent-spirited girls, a good many of whom have taken the long journey from home purely 'on spec,' trusting to their luck to find the work, which, as a rule, sooner or later offers itself, though never at a very exalted rate of pay. Most of them seem extraordinarily well able to take care of themselves, but there are, nevertheless, various agencies in Petrograd that take a sympathetic interest in their well-being; as, for instance, the Girls' Friendly Society, a representative of which, when and where possible, meets the steamer on its arrival. Moreover, under the auspices of the English Church, the 'Princess Alice Home' provides them with very comfortable lodgings at quite reasonable charges until they are suited with a place, and there is, besides, a flourishing Girls' Club actually in the Church premises to which all and every are welcome. The outbreak of the war in less than a fortnight's time from now is to mean to many of these teachers not a little anxiety and real distress, not only through sudden dismissal from their posts but also, and especially, by reason of the practical impossibility, for a while at least, of getting out of the country!

Wednesday, July 22nd.

A day of stagnant calm and equatorial temperature. I am not sorry, therefore, that duty compels me to stay indoors this morning in the comparative coolness of the Chaplain's room on the Church premises. Every Wednesday he, or his delegate, is officially 'at home' from 10—12 for the purpose of interviews, and, more particularly, once a month, for the payment of the pensions which the Church funds provide for the maintenance of some dozen or more deserving and destitute women in the Colony. On this occasion, however, no one puts in an appearance but one old lady of the most communicative type. She tells me, among much other entertaining information, that in the early hours the strikers have been doing tremendous damage in the suburbs, that in the northern districts there have been fierce conflicts with considerable bloodshed, and that the entire service of trams has been suspended, not only because 120 cars have been broken up but also because the drivers refuse to venture out for fear of personal injury at the hands of the rioters. Later in the day matters reach a still higher pitch of seriousness. The whole of the local Strike Committee have been arrested by the police, and the mob are bent on reprisals. In the Viborg Quarter, as also on Vasíli Óstrov and near the Warsaw Station, they have erected barricades with felled telegraph-posts and paving stones, behind which great masses of men, carrying red pennons which they have manufactured by the simple process of tearing strips out of the flags used for the decoration of the streets, defy all attempts of the authorities to reach them. It is as well for me that my visit to Uspénski was arranged for yesterday, for this afternoon a train on the Finland Railway is stopped four miles outside

the city, the passengers forced to get out, every window in the carriages broken, the engineer compelled to blow off steam, and the rails removed for some distance on either side. A detachment of Cossacks is hurriedly summoned to the scene, but on its arrival the band of wreckers has entirely disappeared! My indoor duties at length over, there is still more than an hour to spare before I am due for luncheon at the Embassy; so I stroll quietly along the Quays in the blazing heat past my destination to sit awhile and recover my strength in one of the long shady avenues of the Summer Gardens close at hand. A pretty little park, this, only divided from the Nevá by the breadth of the roadway; its rural charm, perhaps, somewhat discounted by the presence of refreshment-stalls and the artificial element introduced by marble statues, good, bad and indifferent, that greet the eye at every turn: but, nevertheless, with its trim, green lawns and umbrageous trees, truly a welcome shelter from the burden and heat of a July day. Running its whole length on the riverside is a wonderfully elaborate railing of wrought iron, in the centre of which is the chief entrance, where a handsome memorial Chapel marks the scene of an attempt made upon the life of the ill-starred Alexander II, on April 4th, 1866. The shrine bears upon its pediment the inscription in letters of gold, 'Touch not Mine anointed.' Inside the Gardens, somewhat hidden away at one side, is the Small Palace of Peter the Great, an unpretentious building of two storeys, whose humble proportions contrast somewhat strikingly with the more modern ideal of an imperial residence. Unless one happens to be an enthusiast on the subject of the carpentering achievements of the first and most versatile of the Tsars, it is not worth while to pay the place a

visit. As a matter of fact, there is only one building associated with his memory that is of real interest to the sight-seer, and that is his House, on the opposite side of the water. Here one finds oneself at the actual birthplace of the great city, that, founded on an island to the north of its present main site, eventually drifted away from the scene of its original settlement, spreading across the Nevá to the mainland on the south and east. It is not a little disappointing at first to discover the object of one's search masquerading under the guise of a wayside railway station, with glass-roofed entrance leading to a solid stone structure beyond! The explanation of the mystery, however, soon reveals itself. The House is far too precious a historical relic to be allowed to run the risk of injury by the vicissitudes of time or weather, so, for the last 130 years, the little rough, one-storey log-hut (for it is no more at best than that) has passed a sheltered, venerated existence within the protecting walls of the more substantial building erected around and over it. Put up by Peter Ist's own hands—he was then of six years standing as a D.C.L. of Oxford!—of the three small, low-ceilinged rooms it contains two now serve as a museum of his handiwork and personal treasures, the third being used for a chapel, in which divine service is continually performed throughout the day. Immediately above the altar hangs the sacred ikon invariably carried about by the Emperor. No one, by the way, should find himself on this northern bank of the Nevá without taking the opportunity of paying a visit to the notorious Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, situated on an island hard by—a curious combination of the ecclesiastical, the civil and the military, in that, originally built as a bulwark of the new city against the Swedes, it has served as a State

Prison (until recently), as the close of a Cathedral and as barracks for the garrison of the capital. In view of the grim and tragic history associated with the place, it is with something of the feeling of 'All hope abandon ye' that, after crossing the sentry-guarded drawbridge, one enters it through two imposing archways in its double line of walls. But, once within, there is nothing for the ordinary visitor to see that is awe-inspiring or even satisfyingly impressive. With the green turf, the neatly-kept walks and the great shady trees of its central quadrangle, its general appearance, except for the number of soldiers constantly 'en évidence,' is more quietly and picturesquely collegiate than otherwise. The dungeons, to which, whether rightly or wrongly, tradition has attached so unenviable a notoriety, are well out of sight; in some cases, actually below the water-line on the river front. Indeed, if it were not for the historical interest of the Cathedral that, flanked by its quite modern appendage, the Grand Ducal Mausoleum, rears its slender gilded spire to a height of nearly 400 feet in the very midst of the antiquated fortifications, there is nothing to delay one ten minutes among such very tame surroundings. The main attraction, of course, of this comparatively small eighteenth century sanctuary consists in the fact that it is the burying-place of the Románov dynasty since the time of Peter the Great, the actual sites of the graves being marked by white marble sarcophagi ranged closely together, the earlier groups facing the altar on either side in two rows, the later, extending westward in historical order down the north aisle, and practically blocking it up. Perhaps the most striking feature of these imperial tombs is their singular lack of ornamentation. Whereas from one

end of the Cathedral to the other the walls of the aisles and the pillars of the nave are thickly hung with trophies and emblems and elaborate silver mourning-wreaths, there is nothing whatever to indicate the royal character of the sepulchres that in dignified simplicity lie beneath but, on each, four gilded eagles at the corners. On the day I paid my visit a parochial, not to say domestic, touch was added to the more august associations of the place; for a service was being held for the benefit, apparently, of a small battalion of infants in arms, who, incidentally, were not behindhand in contributing their own chorus of unqualified disapproval to the more formal musical efforts of a choir composed of khaki-clad soldiers! Once a day the superannuated Fortress forcibly reminds Petrograd of its existence by the report of a noon-tide gun fired by electricity from the Nicholas Observatory at Púlkovo, some twenty miles distant: the explosion must vividly recall to the present Tsar, whenever resident in the Winter Palace exactly opposite, his own narrow escape from death in the earlier years of his reign. The occasion, it may be remembered, was that of the annual Festival of the Blessing of the Waters, when one of the guns fired in salute at the conclusion of the ceremony proved to be (accidentally?) loaded with ball, with very nearly fatal results to the royal party marshalled on a staging immediately in front. A great review is being held this afternoon at Krásnoe Seló in honour of the visit of the French President, to be in time for which the Ambassador and his daughter have to depart by motor-car directly after lunch; for myself, after two delightful hours divided, in the society of Lady Buchanan, between an inspection of some of the more important pictures at the Hermitage and a shopping call at a perfectly irresistible

Russian Peasant Industry dépôt in the Litéini Prospékt, the rest of the daylight is energetically spent in lawn-tennis in the grounds of the Cadet Academy. We hear this evening that the strikers are still showing signs of dangerous activity, but that the military have them well in hand. One comforting evidence in our own neighbourhood of the preparedness of the authorities against the possibility of surprise is the presence in one of the big courtyards of the Galérnaya of a company of mounted police, ready for instant action, should the need arise.

PART II

Outbreak of Hostilities: Journey to Odessa and back

(July 30—August 22)

Synopsis of Events, July 25—July 30.

[*June* 28.—Murder of the Austrian heir-apparent, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and his morganatic wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, at Sarajevo; Austria and Germany hold Serbia responsible, and resolve on her military punishment.]

July 25.—Tidings reach Petrograd that Austria has presented a peremptory ultimatum to Serbia, demanding an entirely satisfactory reply within 48 hours. Mobilization of 8 of the 16 Austrian Army Corps.

July 26.—Great anxiety at the British Embassy at Petrograd; Chancellery working at high pressure.

July 27.—Hostilities to-night declared inevitable, mainly owing to the attitude of Germany.

July 28.—News this evening of formal declaration of war against Serbia by Austria, and of the bombardment of Belgrade. British Embassy has received no official intimation, but Reuter's representative is in full possession of facts. Immense excitement in Petrograd; crowds sing and cheer before the British Embassy; attempts to make anti-German demonstration in St. Isaac's Square frustrated by the police.

July 29.—Russia mobilizes to-night her 13 Army Corps stationed on the Austrian frontier; lighthouses extinguished the whole length of the Finnish coast; German fleet said to be massing at Königsberg; English £1 risen in exchange from 9*r.* 25 *k.* to 10*r.* 50*k.*

July 30.—At midnight, general mobilization of the Russian Army.

PART II

OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES: JOURNEY TO ODESSA AND BACK

Thursday, July 30th.

A fairly bright morning and much cooler. After early service at the English Church I receive a telephone message from a member of the congregation to the effect that her sister is lying dangerously ill of typhoid in the Military Hospital on the Viborg side, and asking me to go and visit her without delay. Thanks to my entire inability either to understand or explain myself in Russian it takes me, on arrival at my distant destination, the best part of an hour to ascertain my patient's whereabouts, and, having at length discovered it and presented myself for admission, I am politely but firmly refused entrance. But not for long; for my card sent in to the Matron, bearing upon it the words 'Angliśki syvastchénnik' ('English Clergyman'), proves an effective 'Open Sesame,' and, clad in a voluminous white overall reaching from my neck to my feet, I am eventually conducted to the large, beautifully clean ward, where, all alone, in a stifling atmosphere, and persecuted by innumerable flies, the half-conscious sufferer is fighting for her life. My ministrations over, I have to hurry back by steamer and dróshky through the pouring rain, to be in time for lunch at the house of Reuter's representative in Petrograd, a Mr. Beringer; a meal to which I have been eagerly looking forward in the hopes of learning from

so well-informed an authority some really reliable war-news. It is a fact that the through-journey to England *viâ* Berlin is no longer guaranteed; it is also undeniably true that both the 'suisse' and the 'dvórnik' at my own lodgings have been 'mobilized' for possible service—but what about all the other rumours that are busily circulating? The Baltic is mined, we hear, and full of German ships; the English fleet has sailed westward under sealed orders; the Japanese have asked to be allowed to help us 'to the last ship and man,' should we be drawn into hostilities; the Serbs have scored a victory over the Austrians in the first battle fought; and a German descent upon Hango is imminently expected. How much of all this is true? Unfortunately, the gentleman, from whom answers to all my questionings were to be forthcoming, is unable through pressure of business to return home for lunch, so curiosity has to go unappeased; his wife tells me that she and her husband have been at work on the telephone practically all night, with the gleaning of very little news that is definite as the result of their long and tiresome vigil. However, three facts are certain enough amid all the 'mélange' of current gossip; that Russia realizes that no honourable escape is any longer open to her from the duty of championing her fellow-Slavs of Serbia against the aggressive designs of Austria, although even at this eleventh hour she is offering to stop mobilization if Vienna will acknowledge Serbian sovereignty; that, in the event of hostilities being forced upon her, the campaign will be the most popular on which she will have embarked since 1812; and that, with an almost pathetically confident positiveness, she is relying on the whole-hearted co-operation in her undertaking, not of France only—for that is a foregone conclusion—but

of Great Britain as well, the traditional foe of tyrants and bullies, the defender of the down-trodden, the friend of humanity, liberty and justice. This evening my English host and I have engaged ourselves to dine with a mutual friend at his country-house at Párgolovo, a most picturesque little village of dátchas some half an hour's run from Petrograd by rail, and a very delightful and refreshing time do we spend alike in the enjoyment of the hospitalities of his comfortable bungalow, and in acquainting outselves with the beautiful lake and woodland scenery of its surroundings. On the drive back to the station quite an exciting adventure befalls us. Our dróshky is stopped in a dark and narrow lane by a huge crowd of 'demonstrators,' all carrying thick sticks and singing the National Hymn at the top of voices whose huskiness is readily traceable to the last public-house! The multitude close in all round, and one of their number, who acts as spokesman, requests us to inform him of our nationality, enquiring, moreover, why, on our hearing the strains of the Russian Anthem, we had not straightway uncovered our heads. My comrade, who speaks Russian like a native, replies chaffingly that we have not as yet heard anything approximately resembling the patriotic melody in question. This for the moment non-plusses our interrogator, who, evidently, has but little sense of humour. But he soon returns to the charge. 'If,' he shouts, 'you do not tell us who you are and why you have kept your hats on, we shall upset you into the mud!' It is not always wise to rely too much on the sustained good temper of a Russian mob, so now the discretion of a soft answer is obviously the better part of valour. 'Listen, all of you,' cries my friend, standing up in the carriage, 'we are both of us English-

men born and bred, and if you'll start that hymn of yours again, and sing it properly, we'll stop here with our hats in our hands as long as ever you care to keep it up!' The effect of this little speech is electrical. The crowd breaks into uproarious cheering; their leader leans over and kisses again and again both the hands of the lately suspected stranger; the familiar hymn bursts out afresh—this time with considerable approach to recognisable tune—and we both join in it heartily, erect and bare-headed, until the roysterers have had their fill, and, with a final round of applause, send us galloping off into the gloom to catch our homeward train by the barest possible margin.

Friday, July 31st.

An ugly, grey, blustery day, with threatening rain. The two principal officials of the English Church have invited me to go this morning and talk matters over with them: how little do I foresee as I leave home to keep the appointment what the result of the interview will be! Am I to remain at my post here in Petrograd indefinitely—or, at least, until one of the Chaplains succeeds in returning from England? Or shall I, while the chance still, apparently, lies open, try and make my way home without delay? That is the question to be decided. Much to my surprise on arrival at the rendezvous, I find the answer practically settled for me. Both of the kindly, sympathetic men are unanimously insistent that I should pack up and depart as soon as possible, pay me my stipend up to date, undertake to make all arrangements possible for the carrying on of the Church work after my departure, and, in order to protect me against any criticisms my sudden disappear-

ance may provoke, generously provide me with a signed document accepting all responsibility in the matter. The Stockholm steamer 'Döbeln' is lying alongside the Nikoláevskaya Quay, hard by the office where our decision has been reached; we board her, find she is due to sail this afternoon at 4 p.m., engage a berth, and 'taxi' up into the city, where, for 63 roubles odd, I purchase tickets for the journey, which, after Stockholm, is to be *viâ* Copenhagen and Esbjerg to Harwich. Packing, lunch, and a few hurried farewells fill up the time until 3 p.m., when my host and I drive down to the Quay with my luggage, only to be greeted on arrival alongside the steamer with the dismaying intelligence 'No good coming aboard; the boat is forbidden to sail!' It appears that the forts at Cronstadt have orders to fire at once on any ship that by passing through the minefield outside might betray the line of passage through the danger-zone to any lurking German picket-boat. Here's a pretty kettle of fish! Petrograd to-day in a state of lesser siege; the whole city mobilized down to the third division of reserves; the last train from Russia into Germany to leave at 7.5 p.m., with every seat and all standing room engaged; no guarantee given of the journey's continuance beyond the Russian frontier—and no other human means of leaving the country available except by a steamer that, for the present, at least, is under stringent orders not to cast loose from her moorings!

As the advertised sailing-time approaches, crowds of folk turn up, with piles of impedimenta, in dróshkies and hotel-buses, all to be staggered with the tidings of no departure. Most of them retire crestfallen, luggage and all; others, including myself, obtain permission to come on board with our handbags, the larger trunks

and boxes to be left in stacks on the quay below. The various nationalities group themselves together on deck, and, in many tongues and with much emphatic gesticulation, the situation is reviewed, plans are debated, surmises aired and discussed. A little band of Englishmen insist that it is my bounden duty as British Chaplain to head a deputation to the Ambassador to 'demand' through his intervention an instant release of the steamer or, failing that, the provision for them by the authorities 'somehow' of the means of reaching home! My refusal to act as suggested is not kindly received. A party of three Americans, with characteristic promptitude, rush off to hire a motor-car, with a view to making for the Swedish frontier near Torneå in North Finland; how they fared, I know not. The rest of us settle down, with what resignation we can muster, to await developments on board. All sorts of rumours reach us towards evening; that an English squadron is occupying the Belt; that twenty-nine Dreadnoughts are 'hanging on to the tail' of the German fleet; that Germany and Austria are already anxious to make peace; with many other exciting and amusing 'canards' of a similar breed. The weather has cleared towards sunset, and as we sit on deck, enjoying an after-dinner smoke, the broad, cobble-paved roadway that runs alongside down to the port is thronged and noisy with the tramp of ceaseless streams of reservists, naval and military; rarely, marching to the blaring, lilting strains of a brass band; more generally, trudging along, bundle on back or in hand, in sullen silence; the women-folk, many of them weeping as if their hearts would break, breathlessly struggling to keep pace with husbands, brothers, sons or lovers on either side, as company after company swings past. 'For two days

past these sturdy sons of the soil have been collecting at their various depôts; some dazedly, ignorant of whys and wherefores, recognizing necessity perforce, and wondering why they should leave their farms so soon before harvest; others have deserted their burnt-up lands with a shrug—in many districts there will be no harvest in any case—and they bear the new caprice of fate with indifference. Shaggy, uncouth peasants, they herd sheepishly into the appointed rendezvous, and are there transformed into genial, swaggering soldiers, a little shy, perhaps, of their trim appearance, easily abashed by personal remarks, but restored to the verge of boastfulness by a hint as to the prowess they will doubtless exhibit against the Germans.'

'It seems that some gigantic hand
Behind the veils of sky
Was driving, herding all these men
Like cattle into a cattle-pen;
So few of them can understand,
So many of them must die.'

A. Noyes.

The swiftness and completeness of this feature of the Russian mobilization is, considering the enormous difficulties of transport, little short of a miracle.

Those of us who are allowed to stay on board to sleep—and the boat seems to fill up considerably towards late evening for this purpose—turn in quite early for a long night's rest after a very tiring and distracting day; but slumber for the most part refuses to be wooed; the cabins are microscopic and stuffy, the bunks unyieldingly hard, and thoughts are too aggressively insistent to permit of appreciable headway to be made in the 'knitting up of the ravelled sleeve of Care.'

Saturday, August 1st.

Another breezy, heavy-clouded, drab day. I go up on deck about 7 a.m. and find the majority of my fellow-passengers already strolling up and down in the morning air or sitting moodily about in sheltered spots. A friend comes on board shortly after breakfast and tells me that, whereas yesterday all the trains on the Finnish railway were being run exclusively for military purposes, to-day the line is open once more for ordinary time-table traffic. Is this a hopeful sign? Does it mean that mobilization along the coast of the Gulf is already complete? Or have circumstances so changed as to render the need of its continuance less urgent? Orders come round this morning that we are not to go further away from the ship than the length of the quay, for official permission to sail is hourly expected, and on its receipt an instant start will be made. Is this, again, another favourable symptom? Anyhow, it is not worth while to incur the risk of being left behind, so we accept our enforced captivity with what grace we can, and spend not uninteresting hours in watching the busy scene all round us. Just across the water are the docks and wharves of the New Admiralty, where, amid clouds of smoke and much hubbub of hammering and the whining of tackle and the rumble of machinery, two or three destroyers are receiving their finishing touches previous to departure on active service. The great river itself is alive with miscellaneous craft, all, apparently, bent on errands of desperate hurry. While on the quays alongside there is ceaseless movement—the everlasting, shuffling tramp of reservists, the rattle of vans, the lumbering of high-piled lorries, the noisy toil of stevedores, hard at work in loading cargoes on to vessels that most probably will never be able to

deliver them at their destination. News of all kinds keeps pouring in; most of it ludicrous samples of local inventiveness. Tea-time brings with it a not unwelcome thrill in the sound of the booming of distant heavy guns, which turns out to be nothing more serious in its source, after all, than artillery practice at Cronstadt. While we sit at dinner copies of an ultimatum are handed round, in which it is officially stated that at 2 a.m. this morning Germany has peremptorily bidden Russia to put an immediate stop to her mobilization, under pain of declaration of war. As it is now 8 p.m. and, so far as rumour has it, Russia has abated no whit of her preparations for the inevitable, hostilities are presumably already afoot. The momentous tidings are, of course, by now common property, and as we gather in little knots on deck after the meal to exchange excited chatter on the situation, there is wafted to us across the water, like the far-off growl of breaking surf, the low roar that tells of vast commotion in the crowded streets. It is very late before we can bring ourselves to separate for our respective cabins, and hardly have I shut my eyes when a young Englishman rushes in to tell me that the worst is only too true—that Germany declared herself in a state of war with Russia at 6 p.m. this evening; that a Russian battle-ship has been blown up by a Russian mine; that the Kaiser's Baltic fleet is expected to appear off Cronstadt in 15 hours; and that food in Petrograd has already gone up 100 per cent in price! A nice soporific to administer in 'the wee sma' hours!'

Sunday, August 2nd.

The strangest, most unpleasant and eventful Sunday I have ever spent. There was not much rest for

anyone aboard last night, and the decks are very early astir; the bright, warm sunshine being a truly delightful change after the glooms and chill of the last two days. At 7.30 I take one of the small row-boats that continually ply on the Néva, cross to the other side, and celebrate the Holy Communion at the English Church at 8.15. The crowd is an early riser, and great masses of folk are already wandering aimlessly up and down the streets or else packed like herrings on the bridges and along the quay walls; not talking so much as just staring, with that vacant look upon their faces which seems to tell of the consciousness of a big happening, the immensity of whose significance has rather dulled the mind than stimulated the imagination. It is not quite comfortable for a stranger to have to push his way through that surging mob. Not for the last time during my sojourn in Russia after the outbreak of the war does my tell-tale clerical collar earn for me suspicion openly expressed both by scowling glance and (happily, unintelligible) word. On the present occasion, by the way, that collar is the only symbol of my profession that I can muster—all my luggage, save a hand-bag, helping to swell the large pile of trunks, etc., that is stacked under cover of the quay. I had never guessed before how startlingly bright is the hue of a pair of brown boots, and how impossible it is to mitigate it even under the shadow of the skirts of a long cassock, until it fell to my lot to stand up to read the Lessons before a large congregation at Matins on this unforgettable Sunday with my highly-coloured feet in full view! After service, the Ambassador comes into the vestry to invite me to lunch. I tell him I dare not be away from my steamer in case she receives sudden orders to leave. On driving down to the quay, how-

ever, in His Excellency's fine pair-horse victoria, we find there is no immediate chance of departure, though I had 'better be back as soon as possible.' Everybody at the Embassy is looking tired and worried—the Chief, in particular. Is it to be wondered at? He, in addition to his own personal anxieties as to the turn events have taken, and are likely to take, is with his staff being absolutely worked to death. Last night after dinner he was suddenly summoned by the Tsar to a private interview, and had to rush off in his motor-car to Peterhóf—a distance, there and back, of some fifty to sixty miles. We hear at lunch that Germany has already invaded and annexed Luxemburg, but that neither England nor France has yet declared war against her. Of other definite news there is none. Enquiries from British residents and visitors are continually coming in over the telephone, and downstairs there are little groups of excited folk waiting in the hall, all pressing for a favourable answer to the same urgent question, 'Cannot the Ambassador use his influence with the authorities to obtain the sailing of neutral steamers for England?' The only reply they receive is that the Embassy is helpless at present. On bidding my kind hosts adieu I discover at the outset of the long walk to the Docks that the press in the streets has grown to absolutely gigantic proportions. The Tsar is to hold a solemn service at three p.m. at the Winter Palace in connection with the commencement of hostilities, and the great Square of which the Palace forms the western side, as well as all the thoroughfares leading into it from every direction, is one solid mass of miscellaneous humanity, through which dróshkies and motor-cars with freights of gorgeously-uniformed officers and officials push their difficult way at a snail's pace. There is shouting here

and singing there, and everywhere the frenzied waving of national flags and the display of cheaply-printed portraits of the beloved 'Little Father.' Woe betide you if you fail to remove your hat as you pass by one of these highly-coloured pictures! The wisest and the safest thing is to remain uncovered all the time. To walk through the dense multitude on the quays is well-nigh impossible, so I slip round at the back of the Square, past hundreds of limbers and ammunition waggons packed outside the Hermitage, to St. Isaac's, where, though the human crush is somewhat smaller, the great, wide space in front of the Cathedral is crammed almost to the last inch of standing-room with lines of tethered horses commandeered in the city and outlying districts for service at the front. I only reach my steamer just in time, for, as I cross the Nikoláevski bridge that leads to the quay where she is berthed, the police are already beginning to clear the thronging multitude off it in anticipation of the Tsar's arrival. At 3 p.m. punctually the thunder of salutes fired by the war-ships and batteries at the Port announces the approach of his yacht—he has come all the way from Peterhóf by water—and she shortly heaves in sight, a small black two-funnelled paddle-boat steaming at full speed up the river—all traffic upon which has for some hours past been stopped—and escorted on either side by swift and vigilant picket-boats. The din of the cheering that arises at the sight of the Emperor standing on the yacht's bridge dressed in naval uniform is simply deafening, and its volume swells into a very tempest of sound, as the tidings of his advent spread from the water's edge to the remoter parts of the city. The royal landing-stage almost opposite the English Church is his destination; here he disembarks, and soon dis-

appears from view on board a fast launch in the direction of the Winter Palace, his arrival at the river-side steps of which is shortly afterwards heralded by a recrudescence of uproarious acclamation and the boom of the cannon of the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. Of the great service of solemn dedication and intercession that follows, and of the historic speech delivered by the Tsar to the assembled thousands of his people from the central balcony of the Palace, I can chronicle nothing, although of the progress and popular approval of the latter it is easy enough to judge from a distance by the repeated outbursts of wild applause that it provokes. The next episode of the impressive ceremony that presents itself to us on ship-board is the Emperor's return to his yacht at 6 p.m., and his departure seawards in the mellow light of a perfect evening, a solitary figure on the vessel's bridge, erect and rigid, the hand raised in unrelaxed salute to the peak of his naval cap, amid such a tumultuous demonstration of his people's reverence and love, as, surely, it has seldom fallen to the lot of any ruler to receive. Hardly has the Imperial steamer disappeared round the sweeping bend of the river than the great—and, to some, momentous—surprise of the day is sprung upon us. We come downstairs from the upper deck to find our vessel in the hands of the police! A colonel of gendarmes is already installed in the smoking room; the stern quarters are entirely shut off from use by the passengers; and, guarding the approaches thereto as well as the gangways and the quay below, are some dozen or so stalwart uniformed 'gorodvói.' We are gently but firmly herded together by our captain in the open space near the engine-room, and told to consider ourselves prisoners until our papers, etc., have been examined and

our nationalities ascertained. One by one we are sent for and ushered into the inquisitor's presence. A kindly-faced, polite old gentleman is he, befittingly brusque and business-like in his questionings, but, quite unlike one or two of his subordinates, not at all anxious to make the doing of his duty unnecessarily offensive. My turn comes at last after a weary wait, and, standing before a little table mainly occupied by an interpreter and sheaves of official-looking documents, I am asked in French to produce my passport, which is duly scrutinized. 'Clergyman?' enquires the colonel, reading the description there given of my profession, 'Qu'est-ce-qu'il veut dire ça, monsieur?' I inform him to the best of my ability. 'Tiens,' is his smiling comment, 'c'est bien drôle! Je vous croirais officier de marine!' My vivâ voce is not a very long one, as, apparently, it is sufficient to have proved myself an Englishman. At a nod from his chief, a six-foot policeman stationed at the door taps me on the arm, jerks his thumb over his right shoulder in the direction of the ladies' saloon hard by, and sees to it that I lose no time in following out his hint by squeezing myself into an already overcrowded little room, where every seat has long ago been occupied, and whose atmosphere, with every port-hole shut, presumably by order, can better be imagined than described. Fuller and stuffier the tiny cabin grows as the examination proceeds, until, after some two hours of semi-asphyxiation, I struggle to the door, and behind our big guardian's back beckon urgently to the interpreter sitting by the colonel's side. He comes to enquire what I want; I tell him that, as an Englishman, my first desire is fresh air, and my second, dinner—it being by now well after 9 p.m. Going back, he whispers my wants to the chief, who, much to my astonish-

ment, himself steps forward, and informs me that a friend and I are free of any part of the stern of the ship we like, and of the restaurant too, on condition that, as soon as our meal is over, we return to whence we came. 'For an Englishman,' is his genial assurance, 'all shall be comfortable, so far as we can make it, but for the others?'—with hands extended and an expressive shrug of the shoulders—'what do you think, eh?' After the most leisurely dinner on record, we retrace our steps to the scene of our late captivity to find the examination over and our fellow passengers, released from durance vile, sitting along the seats of the lower deck, and ravenously devouring the food and drink that the ship's waitresses have been allowed to bring them. The Germans and Austrians have already been segregated, and locked up in their cabins. We meet our friend the colonel just going off home, and trespass unblushingly on his kindness with three more requests. 'May we go a little stroll along the quay?' 'Certainement, monsieur,' and a little pencilled pass is instantly forthcoming. 'May I have leave to dine at the British Embassy to-morrow?' 'Mon ami, allez y diner ce soir, si cela vous convient!' 'Could we English go to bed' (it is now 12.45 a.m.!) 'without waiting up with the rest for the inspection of our hand-luggage?' 'Assurément, Messieurs, et dormez bien, si vous le pouvez'—and the necessary instructions are given. At what hour the less fortunate of our shipmates are able ultimately to turn in I cannot conceive, for at 2 a.m. the police are still busy overhauling the lighter articles of baggage; but we retire about 2.30 to sleep the sleep of the jaded and the just, after the experiences, entertaining no less than annoying, of a very full and eventful day.

Monday, August 3rd.

A cold, dismal, windy morning. We find on assembling for breakfast at 9 a.m. that the ship is still in the hands of the police, but that British subjects, and they alone, can, if they desire it, be furnished with a pass allowing them to go ashore. The gossips have it that German troops are already across the French frontier, and that 'somewhere' a battle has taken place between the fleets of the two countries. Intense anxiety is finding expression everywhere as to the part (if any) England is likely to play in the hostilities: the feeling seems to be that she is 'sitting on the fence,' until it is made clear which side it will pay her best to favour. The early newspapers re-emphasize the fact, which yesterday was announced by means of pink placards posted about the streets, that no tidings about the progress of the war will be given save in the briefest official bulletins, and that no intelligence other than that so provided is to be considered authentic and reliable. It turns out that even the crew of our steamer and its little bevy of waitresses had perforce to submit yesterday to the same examination as ourselves, and none of them are yet permitted to go ashore under any pretext whatever. Consequently, replenishment of the commissariat being practically impossible, meals are beginning to err seriously on the side of scantiness. I really cannot help feeling sympathy for the unfortunate Germans, who are still in captivity on board, and are being subjected to another searching scrutiny downstairs, whilst on deck their luggage is unsparingly overhauled; the contents of trunks, boxes and handbags being scattered everywhere in the most pitiful disarray—the result of a ransacking as ruthless as it has been thorough. Not a pocket unexplored; not a book

unlooked into; not a letter unread! One of their number, an Austrian engineer, is the owner of an elaborate set of mechanical drawings; he, apparently, quite fails in his efforts to convince his catechizers that the tracings are far more innocent than they look! At 12.30 the Ambassador appears in his carriage alongside, and sends in a message that he desires to see me. On going ashore, he extends the characteristically generous invitation that I should come and stay awhile at the Embassy, as there is little prospect of our ship being allowed to start, and it will be better for me to be on inviolable British territory, until England has declared her intention of fighting on the side of Russia. A mob in these parts soon gets out of hand, and has distinctly awkward ways of showing its disapproval. Anyhow, I shall be safer under the Ambassador's wing at night than in the cabin of an easily raidable steamer! Great is the envy of my fellow-passengers as I drive off in state, my goods and chattels following behind on a dróshky. To what pitch of exasperation their jealousy would be aroused could they but see the magnificent suite of rooms placed at my disposal at the Embassy, I cannot conceive. However, as things turn out, it is not for long that I am destined to be their privileged tenant. The problem and chances of my 'escape' from Russia being, among other matters of a far graver order, the subject of discussion at lunch, the Chief suddenly asks me if I would like in a similar capacity to accompany the regular King's Messenger, who is starting to-morrow in the endeavour to get both the English and French despatches through to their destination *viâ* Odessa, Constantinople and Marseilles! Unhesitatingly and gratefully I answer him, 'Yes!' It appears that the French Embassy have negotiated

with the Tsar's Government for the running of a special train through from Petrograd to the Black Sea for the conveyance of the many reservists who, resident in Russia, have received orders to join the colours at home without delay. On arrival at Odessa, the men will board a troop-ship, and complete their long journey by sea. My confrère and I are to be the only English passengers, and a compartment has already been reserved for the couriers and their precious bags of official correspondence. If ever there were the makings of an interesting and unique adventure, here they are, in very truth! We are told frankly that there may be difficulties, if not insuperable hindrances, in the way of 'getting through': what does that matter, however? If we fail, we fail; but we shall, anyhow, be the richer for many a new experience. As we are to make an early start to-morrow, preparations for departure have to be begun at once, and most of the afternoon is strenuously spent in packing and letter-writing. At tea-time, two passports are handed to me; the one, that regularly provided for the use of King's Messengers; the other, a similar document, that, in view of the fact that we are to be in charge of French as well as English despatches, has been furnished by the Ambassador of that country. The first of these differs very little in form and wording from the ordinary traveller's edition of those indispensable credentials: the second is probable more of a rarity—certainly it is so in the hands of an Englishman. It may be of interest, therefore, if I transcribe it below:—

'République Française.'

'Nous, Ambassadeur de France en Russie, re-
'quérons les Officiers civils et militaires chargés de

'maintenir l'ordre en France et prions les Autorités
'investies de la même mission dans les pays alliés ou
'amis de la République Française de laisser librement
'passer Monsieur Mansell Merry, sujet britannique,
'porteur des plis officiels destinés au Gouvernement
'Français et de lui donner aide et protection en cas
'de besoin.'

'à St. Pétersbourg, le 3. Août, 1914.
'L'Ambassadeur de France :
'Paléologue.

'Signature du porteur :
'W. Mansell Merry.'

After dinner this evening we all assemble in the drawing-room, momentarily expecting to hear by telegram that England has cast in her lot with allied France and Russia, but, as the leaden hours drag on and no tidings come through, the suspense becomes almost unbearable. Added to this torturing silence is a certain anxiety as to what the mob may take into their heads to do in their angry disappointment. The last two evenings a huge crowd of 'all sorts and conditions' has collected in the Square outside the Embassy, singing patriotic songs and shouting itself hoarse with cheers for the country, of whose help such golden expectations have been formed. To-night, the great space is empty and silent, and the absence of the multitude looks ominous enough. We have been in bed some couple of hours when we are awakened by the confused tramp of hundreds of feet beneath our windows, and presently there breaks out the old familiar uproar of tumultuous 'Hurrahs' and of national anthems bellowed 'à gorge déployée.' What does it all mean? Has news reached Petrograd of which we at the Embassy are ignorant? Anyhow, 'something' has saved the threatening situation: that 'something'

being, as later transpires, the putting up in the window of the offices of the great newspaper, the 'Nóvoe Vrémya,' of an announcement that England has at last taken the great and anxiously-awaited step, and is now one with Russia in her warfare. Even if the statement is, as alas! we learn to-morrow, entirely incorrect, it has most probably served the altogether admirable purpose of preserving the Embassy for the time being from an epidemic of broken windows, if not ourselves, indeed, from a visitation of cut-throats!

Tuesday, August 4th.

A still, stuffy, sunless morning. An early breakfast, and two hours variously and busily spent—and at 11.30 my comrade and I are off in the omnibus of the 'Hotel Astoria' on our eventful trip; the Secretary of the Embassy and the head Chancellery servant accompanying us to the Warsaw Terminus. What with our own personal luggage and the big, swollen bags of despatches entrusted to our care, our departure looks not unlike a family removal! The station is simply overflowingly full, and in the pandemonium that reigns it is not the easiest thing imaginable to secure attention from harassed porters and bewildered officials, but, ultimately, tickets are (quite unnecessarily, as we find) purchased, trunks registered, and a way successfully carved through the huge, jostling crowd to where the long 'special' is awaiting us, its carriages already packed full of chattering, gesticulating Frenchmen, happy as school-boys to be starting on the big adventure of their lives. The noise is ear-splitting. Give something like a thousand healthy-lunged people the 'Marseillaise' or the Russian Hymn to sing at the top of their voices; intersperse the performance with rounds

of ringing cheers; add as an accompaniment the furious waving of hats and of flags, the clattering turmoil of an ever-shifting throng, attempts at conversation carried on at a yell, and the hissing roar of the great locomotive's steam—and you will get something like a reproduction of the absolutely appalling babel that has broken loose upon the scene! Through the midst of it all, in gorgeous array, surrounded by the glittering uniforms of his staff, there struggles down the platform the French Ambassador, halting every now and then beside some carriage door, and endeavouring to lift his voice above the hubbub, while he delivers a rousing little speech to those of his compatriots who are near enough to be able to hear. We have some little difficulty in discovering the gloomy second-class compartment assigned to us, and no sooner have we found it and are comfortably settled in, than, at 1 p.m. punctually, amid scenes of redoubled enthusiasm and excitement, the great 'convoi' moves out of the station. The slowness of travelling by all ordinary trains in this part of the world is a sore enough ordeal to any Englishman, accustomed as he is to the rapid transit of the railways at home. But the tedious, jolting dawdle of this 'special' of ours must surely constitute a record even for Russia. Between the stations we simply crawl, with repeated halts en route for no apparent reason whatever, as if we were a kind of show organized for the entertainment of the countryside, whose villagers in their Sunday best have flocked to each stopping-place from far and near to greet us and, again assisted by much waving of flags and singing of patriotic songs, to join in frenzied 'manifestations' of mutual amity and goodwill. As evening draws on the question of food begins to assert itself. The train being in the

military charge of a French captain, yclept the 'Commandant,' we search him out and ask him what arrangements have been made for meals on the journey, and are staggered by his answer that at any rate until to-morrow no eatables will be procurable, and that we, like every other of our co-voyageurs, should have furnished ourselves with provisions for four days! A cheerful outlook for two hungry men, whose whole store consists of a few pears and peaches and half a dozen sticks of chocolate! However, the news of our predicament has been passed on to the French officers in the other compartments of our 'wagon,' and it is not long before kindly souls are bringing us in contributions towards a recherché little supper, including bread and cheese, tinned tongue, partridge and pâté de foie gras, not forgetting a couple of bottles of effervescing 'Nazan' water. Two or three of our generous entertainers come in for a chat later on, and the time passes quickly and pleasantly enough until we turn in for the night at 11 p.m.

Wednesday, August 5th.

A grey, cool day; just the sort of weather for railway travelling. The hard cushions of the carriages do not make an ideal bed, neither are the repeated and jerky stoppings and startings that take place all through the night exactly conducive to unbroken slumbers. But we must not complain. Mobilization is being carried out at tremendously high pressure, and we ought to think ourselves fortunate to be allowed to proceed at all, considering the extraordinary amount of military traffic—immensely long trains of men, horses and artillery—that is being crowded along northwards and southwards on a single line of rails. Dvinsk we reach

at 6 a.m., halt there one and a quarter hours, and creep on again through the wretchedly uninteresting country to the big garrison town of Vilna, where the flatness of the scenery is relieved by picturesque, wooded hills. Here we arrive at 1.30, and are told that we shall have at least an hour to wait. The station is absolutely full of soldiers; what the crush becomes when to the crowd already blocking the platforms are added the 200 reservists of our train, all with one accord heading for the buffet, whose entrance is just one solid jam of struggling humanity, is altogether beyond my powers of description. I am carried along by sheer weight of numbers, and presently find myself, crumpled and breathless, in front of the refreshment counter, at which I fill my pockets with all the portable victuals—'zakúskas' for the most part—within reach, pay for the same at, obviously, famine prices, and resign myself to the outgoing tide, which eventually leaves me high and dry somewhere in the vicinity of my carriage. Here a Russian officer, who has 'spotted' my clerical collar, rushes up to me, his countenance aglow with delight, slaps me on the back, shakes me violently by both hands (he nearly kisses me, but I stop him in time!)—and simply shouts at me in perfect English, 'It's all right, sir; it's all right; you're one of us now. We have just had a wire from headquarters to say that England has declared war against Germany. Hurrah!' 'Hurrah!' indeed! Now at last I can hold up my head as among friends, where previously I have felt inclined to apologize for mere existence in undeserved disgrace. Henceforward nothing really matters; for Russian and Englishman are sworn brothers, pledged to fight and to fall in a common cause, until the Tyrant shall be hurled from his pre-

sumptuous throne. We hear that there has been some stiff fighting on the frontier which is not very far distant from here between Russian and German troops: apparently, the latter got the better of it. At 2.30 we are all aboard once more, expecting an immediate start. Leave we actually do, only to be shunted back again before we have gone a mile, and to be told that there is no chance of our being allowed to proceed till 7.30 at earliest! As no one is allowed to quit the station premises, the prospect of the next five hours is scarcely a cheering one! There is one section, however, of our French comrades to which no delay seems irksome, and no 'contretemps' comes amiss. In the middle of the train is a 'wagon' occupied by a party of journalists, who, true to their professional instincts, have already inaugurated a 'newspaper' for the edification and amusement of their fellow-passengers. On the upper woodwork of their carriage they have chalked up in large letters, 'Echo de la Voie Ferrée; Redaction: Administration'; the lower part they have divided off into columns, filled with paragraphs in which 'the latest intelligence' as invented by themselves is intermingled with humorous comments, and illustrated (this feature being supplied by a sailor) by comic cartoons. Here are a few samples of their handiwork:—'Guillaume a demandé au Tsar une trève de huit jours; le Tsar a répondu en lui envoyant au bain.' A picture is appended thereto of the above-mentioned 'William' hanging by his neck from a lamp-post, and entitled, 'Notre premier prisonnier au pilori; ils y viendront tous.' Again, 'On commence à transporter en brouette le débris du détachement allemand mis en déroute par les forces russes. Dix-huit têtes de boches ont été mises dans le wagon frigorifique specialment attaché à

ce train pour améliorer l'ordinaire des réservistes français.' At 7.30 another disappointment is sprung upon us. The move promised for that hour cannot take place after all, for military 'necessity knows no law' except that of its own urgent business, and it may be, we are told, still a 'little while' before the line is clear. 'Nitchevó!' We are already sufficiently Russianized to shrug the shoulder of sublime indifference at the tantalizing ways of Fate, and are really as much surprised as pleased when at 11.15 the 'treti zvonók' actually clang out for our train, and not another, and rumbling wheels beneath us announce the fact that the long lane of procrastination has reached its turning at last! The remaining hours of darkness prove uneventful enough, and, save for one extended halt about 2 a.m., we jog along fairly consistently all night.

Thursday, August 6th.

A fine, bright, breezy morning. At 7 a.m. we have a long halt at a wayside station, of which most of us avail ourselves for the purpose of a wash. There is no lack of the 'wherewithal,' as here, as in not a few other places along the line, is provided a big tank enclosed in brick-work and fitted with a dozen or so taps, in which water is continually kept on the boil for the filling of the tea-kettles of the soldiers in the troop-trains. On this fortunate provision we draw to our hearts' content, and the scene of some couple of hundred men, most of us in a state of extreme déshabillé and soap-suds, scrubbing, swilling and shaving amid clouds of steam in the sloppy vicinity of the boiler is one of the quaintest that can be imagined. A visit to the buffet in search of breakfast results in the purchase of two glasses of tea and some bread and cheese!—the

only eatables procurable. We do somewhat better at another refreshment-room reached about lunch-time, and our mid-day meal not only consists of cold chicken, ham, and bread and butter, but there is also added thereto a bottle of beer apiece—a welcome luxury every now and then provided for the travellers on this train, free of charge, by special permission of the Russian authorities. News to-day is conspicuous by its absence, though our French journalists utilize every stoppage of the train for the posting up of some startling (and home-made) tidings. Appended under the heading 'Chronique Mondaine' is their amusing account of the way we are supposed to have spent the evening hours of yesterday's long delay at Vilna. 'Très joli bal hier en gare de Vilna. Un tango lascif dansé par une délicieuse Vilnoise en charmeuse rose pâle et un de nos marins les plus distingués a obtenu un succès très vif. On a également applaudi la polka des mâtelots. Des chœurs se sont faits entendre à la fin de la soirée. Une assistance extrêmement élègante se pressait dans les vastes salles de la gare. Remarqué notamment . . . '—here follows a long list of their particular friends, male and female, in the train. Of the latter sex some twenty are accompanying us, not to mention a handful of noisy, fidgety and ubiquitous children. France is still obviously prime favourite with the crowd, but England now begins to run her a very good second; so much so that at Luninétz my friend and I, standing at the windows of our corridor, have an embarrassingly demonstrative reception all to ourselves. Enthusiasm runs riot everywhere. Not a troop-train passes ours but breaks out into a deafening tumult of cheers and shouts, and, if one happens to be in a siding as we draw up at a station, not many minutes

elapse before we and the grey-clad soldiers are fraternizing, with the inevitable flaunting of flags and the thunderous rendering of national hymns, among which a fairly recognizable edition of 'God save the King' begins to appear. The weather has become brilliantly fine; almost too hot, in fact, to be exactly comfortable. Nothing could well be more featureless than the flat, sandy country through which we are passing—vast stretches of corn-land, for the most part, interspersed with patches and plantations of birch and pine. But oh! the beauty and variety of the wild flowers growing in profusion by the sides of the railway line! Many of the finest I am not botanist enough to identify, but among the more familiar sorts are, so far as it is possible to see from a moving train, small white and yellow vetches, campions, foxgloves, candytuft, chicory, ragwort, evening primroses, forget-me-nots, St. John's wort, rose of Sharon, and a kind of eryngo—a perfect kaleidoscope of colour; here, thrown up in relief by the dark background of the woods behind, and there, in the more open places, springing amid the deep, lush grass and thick, cushioned, heliotrope ling that spread along the narrow edge of the embankments. We reach Sarni at 4.45, and do not leave till 6. Perhaps it may give some idea of the exasperating slowness of our progress, when I say that it takes us just four hours to cover the fifty-five miles between that place and Rovno, where we arrive at 10 p.m., to be greeted by another absolutely overwhelming reception at the hands of the soldiery and townsfolk, who are crowded on to the long, dimly-lit platform as thick as bees. Rovno, being the headquarters of the Eleventh Army Corps, is normally largely in the occupation of the military, but just now, by reason of its proximity to the Austrian frontier, it is

garrisoned at full strength. Every precaution has been taken against a sudden raid in force on the part of the enemy; the railway, in particular, being protected by troops encamped at frequent intervals, and the line patrolled by armed guards; while some of the stations through which we have lately passed are converted into miniature forts, the existing buildings being loop-holed for rifle fire, and little redoubts of sandbags constructed on the platforms. Considering the importance of the place in these critical times we are agreeably surprised to be let off with only an hour's wait at Rovno, part of which we spend in replenishing our store of provisions, and, dinner following immediately on our start, we are quite ready to settle down for the night at 12.

Friday, August 7th.

It is a fine, bright morning when we rouse ourselves at 6 a.m., but last night's sickly moon prophesied only too accurately the coming change, and both clouds and a strong wind have put in their appearance by the time we reach the large town of Berdítchev at 7.45. It is extraordinary what discomfort even a three days' train journey can produce in the way of miscellaneous dirt. Our compartment, though it only holds two, and Englishmen at that, is already deep in dust, and littered with all manner of débris; of the unpleasant condition of the other carriages, with every seat occupied, and many of their tenants obviously blessed with only the most rudimentary ideas of personal cleanliness and of general hygiene, we are enabled to judge quite sufficiently from occasional passing glimpses. It is not our fault, however, that the supply of water on the train should have failed by the end of the first day; I have to shave this morning in the remains of a glass of

yesterday's tea! From Berdítchev to Kazátin, the junction of the railway to Kiev, is a crawl of just under an hour. Here not only is the station as overflowing with soldiers as ever, but the fields for long distances on either side of the line are a sea of white tents, near to which, tethered row upon row, are thousands of sturdy little horses. After a furious struggle in the crowded buffet in search of further supplies, we are on the move again by 10 o'clock, with the cheering news imparted to us by an officer as a parting gift that all steamer traffic between Odessa and Constantinople is indefinitely suspended! Vinnitza, the head-quarters of the Twelfth Army Corps, we reach at 12 in the midst of a tremendous thunderstorm and a torrential downpour of rain. Here, geographically, we form our first acquaintance with the Bug, though alas!, in the entomological sense, he has already been familiar to us for many a long day past. Next to the flies, he is, 'experto crede,' quite the most common and maddening of all the insect pests that beset one in this unclean land, and his enthusiasm for travel, as evinced by his partiality for trains, is only equalled by his ravenous appetite for good, fresh English blood! Between Vinnitza and the next large station, Zhmérinka, where we arrive at 2.30, we pass the scene of a terrific railway smash. A long train laden with material from some neighbouring quarry has, apparently in the darkness, run into the buffer-stops at the end of a siding instead of proceeding along the main up line; with the result that the whole of it, engine and all, has been telescoped into the most extraordinary pile of stones, twisted metal and shattered woodwork; the heap of débris at the forward end being well over 20 feet high! The usual crowd is looking on in the usual 'Nitchevó' attitude of hands in trouser-pockets,

seemingly rather grateful than otherwise that something has at last happened in the district to mitigate life's monotony. At Zhmérinka we wait a couple of hours, and divide our attentions between the buffet and the ceaseless influx and outflow of immense military 'convois.' One after another these great trains rumble through—hundreds of horse-boxes crammed with cheering, cap-waving soldiers, and truck upon truck of cannon and miscellaneous camp apparatus, with armed men riding in each, all, evidently, in the highest of spirits and enjoying to the full the novel and exciting 'pic-nic' that has left far behind the deadly dreariness of village homes. There is plenty of news for us here to set tongues a-clacking. Heavy fighting, we are told, has taken place near the Belgian frontier between the French and the Germans; the former have come out victors in a fierce battle near Nancy, though with serious losses to themselves; Garros, the French aviator, has charged a Zeppelin with his aeroplane, bringing it down, but losing his own life as the price; and the English fleet has captured the Hamburg-American liner 'Princesse Cécilie,' taking therewith not only many German prisoners but also 15,000,000 marks in gold! The 'Echo de la Voie Ferrée,' of course, is fully up to date in its tidings, informing us incidentally for our own special benefit, that 'On télégraphie de Constantinople que la Sublime Porte a fait préparer des appartements en vue d'un long séjour des voyageurs du train militaire français. Le gouvernement italien a fait les mêmes préparatifs à Naples, et le gouvernement roumain à Constanza. (*N.B.* Il y a un Casino!)' Leaving Zhmérinka at 4.30, the journey is much of the usual type, both as regards scenery and halts, until bed-time at 11 p.m. One is glad to notice,

by the way, that even French excitability is capable of fatigue, and that the uproarious ebullitions of international sentiment which, at the commencement of the trip, were liable to 'go off' at any moment in the twenty-four hours are now mercifully beginning to confine their explosiveness to the period of daylight. A hurricane of tempestuous song and shouting breaking in upon one's slumbers, say at 1 a.m., has hitherto been regarded by us less emotional Englishmen as distinctly 'an acquired taste!' However, these irrepressible Frenchmen are freely forgiven everything for the consistent charm of their friendly fellowship. Some of them—officers, for the most part—speak English admirably; others do not know a word of it. What matters it? We have long ago cemented acquaintance into a brotherhood, which such a trivial difficulty as that of language does not in the least affect. To-night—the last we are to spend in the train together—as many as can manage it squeeze into our carriage after supper, and toasts, both patriotic and personal, are vociferously drunk in somewhat flat beer; the crown being placed on the evening's festivities by the appearance in the corridor of the French Commandant with half a bottle of champagne in his hand, which, he tells us, has been specially put aside at another 'noce' being held by his countrymen in the compartment next to ours as 'a tribute of affectionate goodwill towards our comrades, the Englishmen.' Who could wish, we both think, for a prettier and more pleasantly practical expression of the spirit of the 'Entente Cordiale?'

Saturday, August 8th.

We are up at 6 a.m., on a bright, blazing day, to find ourselves running through a flat, prosperous land-

scape; the fields on either side standing thick, acre upon acre, with Indian corn. One or two brief stoppages, and then, at last, Odessa is reached at 8.45. We had telegraphed yesterday from Zhmérinka to the British Consul here that we should arrive early in the morning, but somehow the message has miscarried, and there is no official at the station to take charge of us and our despatches. This, however, is a minor disappointment compared with the next shock in store for us. None of our heavy luggage, over which the authorities made such a fuss at Vilna, has come through! In vain we search out the 'natchálnik' (station master); in vain we display to him and his staff our registration-tickets, and hunt among the mass of baggage stacked in the main hall, in case (the thought is, of course, ridiculous) ours may have preceded us by some other train. The only response we get is (so far as we can understand) the desolating assurance that in war-time we must not be surprised at anything, and that, while, most probably, our trunks are lost beyond recall, yet, who knows? they may turn up—some day! Nothing, therefore, remains to be done but to charter a dróshky, and drive off in the tropical sunshine through the broad, stone-paved streets to the Consul-General's office some mile or so distant. Again we draw a blank. No one is at home but a Russian servant, to whom with the greatest difficulty we explain our needs, and in his charge we deposit our precious bags. The next thing is to find a Hotel—a question which, we hear, is not likely to be easy of solution as the town is flooded with 'réservistes' from all parts of Russia, who are waiting to leave for France with us on Monday by the specially chartered steamer. However, we are just in time to secure the last two

available rooms in the Hôtel Bristol, and that is something to be thankful for after the previous experiences of the morning. The Consul-General comes to lunch with us at 12, and brings us word that the English fleet has captured fifty German merchantmen—when?—where?—he does not know, but 'anyhow, it is good news, eh?' The heat this afternoon is tremendous; none the less, at 3, we, with one of the Consular staff, make our way afoot down to the Port to see the berths that, presumably, have been assigned to us for our voyage to Constantinople. After some hunting about, we eventually discover our steamer. She is an old 'Messageries Maritimes' boat, the 'Mossoul,' very dirty-looking and, generally, disreputable, with, as we presently find, cabin-accommodation for 99, though now intended for the conveyance of something like 1000 passengers! On boarding her, no one has ever heard of the coming of the English 'couriers,' and as to the reservation of quarters for them—why, 'Assurément, messieurs, ça ne se peut pas. Nous sommes déja au grand complet!' It is useless to discuss the matter further. We beat a reluctant retreat, leaving our fate in the hands of the Consular representative, who hurries off to make his report and bring, through his chief, pressure to bear on the proper authorities. Later on we hear that his efforts on our behalf have been entirely successful, and that my friend is to have a cabin all to himself, in which under lock and key are to be safeguarded the despatches, while I am to share another with the French Commandant. 'Tout est bien qui finit bien!' This sets us free to do a bit of sight-seeing. Odessa, the head-quarters of the Eighth Army Corps, and one of the most important commercial centres on the Black Sea, is, consequently, quite a big place. The

city itself is beautifully situated on a cliff which rises some 150 feet above water-level: it contains not a few really fine buildings, and, with excellent roads, good shops and a general appearance of spruce prosperity, is a refreshing improvement on the normal type of Russian town with which one's journeyings have made one familiar. The huge Harbour is divided into four parts; the New, the Coaling, the Pratique and the Quarantine, alongside the quay of which latter section (the usual berthing-place of foreign vessels) our ramshackle 'Mossoul' is lying. The view obtainable on a brilliant day like the present from the picturesque Nicholas Boulevard or the Alexander Park hard by of the busy, wide-reaching Docks and the deep-blue sea beyond, fringed on its W. and S.W. horizon by the grey and pink highlands of the Khersonese and Crimean shores, is a perfectly enchanting one. I do not think I have ever been in a town, which, outwardly at least, seems more deeply imbued with the spirit of irresponsible gaiety. That there is a strenuous, serious business-side to the life of its citizens goes without saying in a place where mercantile interests are so strongly represented. But of this the casual visitor sees nothing. All he is aware of, especially as the day closes, and pretty late, too, into the hours of darkness, are crowded out-of-door cafés, big, brilliantly-lit hotels, bands playing here and there, and throngs of light-hearted, well-dressed promenaders strolling along the shady length of the Boulevard, or sitting about in the pretty gardens that, ablaze with flowers set in broad stretches of wonderful turf, slope below it down to the Harbour walls. It is difficult to believe amid all this universal 'joie de vivre' that these sunny, festive, careless hours belong to days of bloody and not far distant war! The

women here are, I believe, famous all over Russia for their beauty. I can emphatically endorse that statement. The great Harbour is full of steamers, mostly Russian, with a sprinkling of other nationalities, among whom England is well to the fore. As the authorities are allowing no wheat to be exported 'until further notice,' the vessels are lying empty and idle, no cargoes being procurable for the homeward trip. The wheat that should have provided such freights is piled in mountainous heaps on the Docks, covered over with tarpaulins in company with much other perishable and perishing goods. Moored out at the furthest breakwater are four or five German 'tramps' that Russian destroyers have lately captured in the Black Sea and brought in here for internment—objects of untiring interest to shoals of sight-seers, who row out to gloat over them in boatfuls. There is so much here of the picturesque and entertaining that one longs to fetch one's camera out and set to work. But two English residents whom I meet warn me against so doing; a clerk in one of the local banks, they tell me, is still under arrest for having dared the other day to 'snap-shot' a Russian cruiser as she was entering the Harbour-pool. At the south end of the Nicholas Boulevard is a monument of peculiar interest to an Englishman, *viz*; a cannon, set up on a granite pedestal, on which is a long inscription commemorating the fact that the gun is a relic of H.M.S. 'Tiger,' a British paddle-frigate that ran ashore during the Crimean War some three miles east of Odessa in a fog, (May 12th, 1854), being in her helpless condition smashed to pieces by the Russian artillery and eventually blown up. The best hotels in the place face seawards over this Boulevard, and we elect to dine in one of them, the 'St.

Petersburg,' to-night, with the Consul-General as our guest. A table at the open window has been secured in advance, and sitting there, in the welcome coolness of a perfect evening, while at a distance a band discourses sweet music to parading multitudes just across the way, we agree that the discomforts of the last four restless days have at least served an admirable purpose in providing the sombre background, against which the charm of our present circumstances stands out in delicious relief.

Sunday, August 9th.

A fairly bright, stuffy morning, with heavy, banking thunder-clouds. After breakfast, we go out to sit awhile on the Nicholas Boulevard, sunning themselves on which are many of our late train-comrades. They are full of grievances, mainly àpropos of the sort of accommodation with which last night they have had perforce to put up. Some have had only chairs to sleep on; two have occupied a billiard-table; many have roughed it on the floor; while those who were fortunate enough to secure beds have heart-rending accounts to give, not only of the 'saleté effrayante des draps,' but, far more feelingly, of the voraciousness of the insect-life ambushed within their shelter.

So sympathetically do I listen to their varied tales of woe that I am not aware, until too late, that a local 'tchistílshtchik' has made me his victim, and that my brown shoes, already sufficiently pronounced in tint, are now coloured a violent and vulgar Venetian red, which no subsequent efforts can remove or mitigate. Last Sunday their appearance made me feel somewhat apologetic; to-day it humiliates me to the dust. But I make my way, nevertheless, presently to the English

Church, and find it, after some trouble, situated, like that at Petrograd, in the upper storey of a large building in the Remeslénnaya about half a mile from the sea-front. Architecturally, the Church is rather imposing, though its dimensions are small; consequently, there being quite a large congregation, the temperature is insufferably hot. The service is very hearty and the singing good, but there are associations of the dear, familiar English Liturgy that under present conditions make one feel not a little home-sick. The Consul-General has invited my friend and me to lunch at the 'London' Hotel, whither we repair at 1, to be served with a very fair meal in the gloomiest of 'salles à manger.' The afternoon passes quickly enough in strolling about the Harbour; our visits being mainly confined to the English vessels moored there in search of pipe-tobacco, which has long since been unobtainable. The captain of the very last ship we call on proves himself a trump. Not only does he produce from his own private store the only tin of 'Player's Navy Cut' he has left, and let me have it for a rouble—(I would have given him five times that sum, had he asked it!)—but he also offers to take us back to England at the rate of 2s. 6d. a day each, all found. She is a fine, big steamer he commands, and the invitation is as attractive as it is generous; the only drawback attaching to it being the fact that it may be weeks before she is able to start. The vessel lying quite close to the 'Mossoul,' we climb aboard the latter ship to see how things are getting on. She is already filling up rapidly, and, in this sweltering heat, I pity from the bottom of my soul the unfortunate men, who are trying to accustom themselves to their wretched quarters between decks. The cabins are reserved for officers; the rank

and file are accommodated in the dark and stifling holds, in which, hundreds of them, they have to 'camp out' as best they can under conditions of extremest discomfort. However, they seem festive enough, singing and larking about as if this is the jolliest spree of their lives. Others of them, luckier if the weather keeps fine, have their billets in the open, beneath the great awnings that stretch from one end of the steamer to the other; so thickly are these, too, herded together that it is almost impossible to pass along the decks. How this human beehive is ever going to survive unasphyxiated the long journey that lies before it beats imagination! Coming home to the 'Bristol,' we encounter an absolutely gigantic 'manifestation.' There must be thousands of folk taking part in it, and the effect of the Russian Hymn and the 'Marseillaise' sung 'à haute voix' by this massed and marching multitude with their flaunting English, French and Belgian flags is really impressive and thrilling. The rain, which for some hours past has been threatening, now begins to fall heavily, but nothing seems to damp the ardour of the demonstrators, who, as we rush for shelter, cheerily go on swinging past, an unbroken army-corps of excited songsters, with not an umbrella among them! We again patronize the 'St. Petersburg' Hotel for dinner, but last night's pleasant conditions are altogether lacking. Outside, the deluging showers have spoilt everything; there is no band, and the Boulevard is empty of its usual gay throng of promenaders. Inside, the room is packed, and the service completely upset by a crowd of diners, who, mostly Frenchmen, have come in, as one confides to me, to have one last good meal before embarking. We hear just before turning out bedwards into the wet that the

Germans have not yet succeeded in taking Liège, and that there has been another battle in the North Sea between English and German cruisers, with successful results for the former. It is beginning to blow quite hard; what about the Black Sea to-morrow in half a gale of wind?

Monday, August 10th.

A very windy, drizzling morning following a tempestuous night. After an early breakfast, we go out, in despair of ever seeing our trunks again, to buy shirts, socks, collars, etc., at shamefully high prices. How people afford to dress at all either in America or Russia I cannot understand; yet, in spite of exorbitant charges, they manage it—and very successfully. A shop here would like me to pay £6 for quite an ordinary overcoat, and nearly £3 for a travelling rug! It is fully in accordance with the special type of humour favoured by Fate that the first objects to greet the eye on our return to the Hotel laden with purchases are our two lost portmanteaux, which have just been delivered by the railway people! How they have ever got here it is difficult to imagine, but Consular pressure can work miracles. Lunch over at the 'Bristol,' we annex a couple of dróshkies and drive down to the Quarantine Harbour, whence the 'Mossoul' is due to start at 5 o'clock. Half—particularly, feminine—Odessa is assembled on the Quay to bid us farewell, and it requires all the persuasiveness of our porters, who clear a lane for us through the crowd by using our luggage as battering-rams, to enable us to reach the vessel's side. On board, the decks are packed solid with men, but we manage in time, thanks largely to the same offensive process that has proved so effective ashore, to carve

a way down to our cabins, where welcome relief is obtainable at last from the commotion and crush without. We have not been below very long when we notice that the noise of the shouting and singing both on the Quay and on our own ship has become suddenly a good deal subdued. In fact, the songs have stopped altogether, and cheers and 'Bons voyages' and such like have given place to a confused hubbub of chatter. What has happened? We are not long in hearing the startling and truly annoying news. Orders have come on this, the very verge of departure, from the French Consul that the 'Mossoul' is not to leave! Why? All sorts of reasons and rumours spread like wild-fire; none, probably, with any truth in them at all. But it seems, from whatever cause, that it is not considered safe, in the present uncertainty of Turkey's attitude towards the Allies, and in view of the report which now begins to circulate that the two big Turco-German cruisers, the 'Goeben' and the 'Breslau,' have passed through the Dardanelles into the Black Sea, to put so tempting a bait as we represent unwisely near the clutches of those who might find its attractions irresistible. Anyhow, the tidings are an unpleasant surprise enough; and a bitter disappointment, to boot, though the men do not seem over-depressed, having been assured that 'le départ sera bien certainement pour demain.' At 6.30 a bugle summons their officers and ourselves to a distinctly 'scratch' dinner in the upper saloon. All the conversation turns upon one subject alone, and we hear incidentally, as a cause possibly contributory to our aggravating detention, that an English ship this morning struck a mine in the Dardanelles, with considerable loss of life. As there is no particular object in our staying on board this evening,

and every reason in the world why we should escape as soon and as long as possible from the cramped discomfort of our surroundings, my friend and I get permission from the Commandant to spend a few hours ashore. Great is the envy our departure creates among the crowd we leave behind, who line the rail to throw good-humoured chaff after us as we descend the steep ladder to the Quay level. 'Monsieur,' whispers an officer to me at the gangway-head, 'que vous avez de la chance! Volontiers je me dénationaliserais jusqu'a demain matin afin de vous accompagner!' Well, it is something, indeed, to be an Englishman, even if it only brings the privilege we enjoy to-night of a brief spell of emancipation from that swarming, noisy, floating prison. Oh! the blessed silence of these deserted docks; the joy of spaciousness wherein to walk; the untainted freshness of the breeze that meets us as we climb up town-wards! The 'London' Hotel is our destination, and here, as we sit in the familiar porch-way, amid the glitter of lights, the soft strains of music and the lively, laughing chatter of the gay company around, all thoughts of the 'Mossoul' and of our relation to her are speedily dispelled, until 11 o'clock brings cruel reality with it, and drives us out into the darkness to retrace our steps to the ship. It is a most extraordinary sight that greets us as we reach the top of the gangway. The wind that has blown strongly all day has quite dropped, and the air is stuffily oppressive; so much so that our 'réservistes' have, apparently to the last man of them, deserted their sultry lairs in the holds, and are lying asleep on deck in every conceivable attitude, huddled together like sardines in an open tin, with scarcely an inch of space between them whereon the would-be passer-by may plant his foot.

The occupants of the cabins have also, for the most part, followed suit, and it is with the utmost difficulty that we manage at last to worm our way through the dimly-visible maze of prostrate forms down to the hard and tiny bunks that await us below.

Tuesday, August 11th.

Sleep last night has been practically impossible, not only by reason of the insufferable heat and the variety of noises going on, but also thanks to the pertinacious enterprise of the insect denizens of my berth. What is left unconsumed of me is glad to crawl out on deck at 5 a.m., to find a bright, windy morning, with wonderful clarity of atmosphere, and sea and sky vieing with each other for depth and brilliancy of blue. 'Réveille' is sounded soon afterwards, and the men's attempts at toilet in entirely disadvantageous conditions provide the most entertaining of spectacles. Gradually, too, the slumberers on the upper deck bestir themselves, and, by the time coffee is served at 7 a.m., the ship has resumed its familiar, busy aspect. What are the chances of a start to-day? Pretty thin, is the general impression. All sorts of stories have already begun to drift in from the shore. A Russian steamer has blown up off Nikoláyev (not far from here) through touching a Russian mine, with 100 killed and some 50 saved. Poor thing, this happens to be only too true, and it was but yesterday that we saw her leave the harbour! Another Russian mine has exploded on the Austrian frontier with calamitous results to those who had prepared it for their own defence. England has again sunk 'the usual' 50 German merchantmen in the North Sea; she is, moreover, making a supplementary mobilization of 100,000 men; all the motor-cars in London are being

requisitioned for military purposes, and Olympia has been turned into a concentration camp for German prisoners. The French Consul has promised to let us hear as early as possible whether we are to be allowed to leave to-day, but the good news anxiously waited for all the morning never comes. By déjeuner at 10.15 the delicious breeze of the early hours has entirely died away, and in the glassy calm that follows the heat grows intolerable. We are not surprised, therefore, to hear presently that the men are petitioning their officers to allow them opportunities of air and shade ashore. But as, unfortunately, instructions for departure may come at any moment, their request has to be refused, and with the grumbling that ensues therefrom it is impossible not to sympathize. Having, luckily, no restrictions placed on our movements, my friend and I find a certain amount of amusement in watching the preparations for sailing of two steamers moored near by—one of them Italian—that are resolved to brave the dangers that are keeping other ships in port, and to make their trip, as scheduled, to Constantinople. Their hardihood secures for them a large complement of mixed nationalities, the steerage element considerably predominating, and sail they do presently, amid much cheering and hooting of sirens. Of the ultimate fate of one nothing ever transpires, but the Italian, for some unknown reason, returns to Odessa, so we hear later on, after only one day's experience at sea. 'Side-shows,' however, entertaining though they be as a means 'pour passer le temps,' are not the main object of our presence in this far-off spot. We must know definitely (we feel), and as soon as possible, what are the prospects of an onward move. The afternoon, therefore, is not far advanced before a decision is made

to tap the oracle at head-quarters. A passing dróshky is commandeered, and ere long we are being given to understand at the office of the Consul-General that there is no chance whatever of our getting away to-day—'or, if it comes to that, to-morrow, either,' and that the best thing for us to do is to come ashore and take up our residence at our old Hotel until the French Government has succeeded in making up its mind. We leap only too delightedly at the suggestion, and before another hour has sped we are installed once more in the rooms we imagined but a day ago we had vacated for good, thankful beyond words to be free even only for a while of the over-populated Noah's Ark we have left behind. How can this unlooked-for liberty be better celebrated than by a sumptuous tea at Robinat's in the Yekateríninskaya—most fashionable of the Odessan cafés—and by continuing the thanksgiving at a later hour in the form of a recherché little dinner at the 'St. Petersburg' Hotel? Sitting out afterwards in the soft, sweet air of an absolutely exquisite evening, there is for me only one 'fly in the ointment' of complete enjoyment. This wretched delay is being made at least tolerable for a season by the pleasant diversions of the place in which our lines have fallen. But supposing it to be much further prolonged—what then? My friend insists not only on his readiness to be alone responsible for the delivery of our bundle of despatches but also that he is determined to wait on here until he gets through 'somehow.' I have left my work behind at Petrograd, and, so far as I know, there is no one to carry it on in my absence: ought I, then, to be wasting precious time down here in enforced inactivity, or is not it my plain duty in the circumstances to return as soon as feasible? It is not easy to decide, and long

after we have sought the cosy beds that are such a welcome contrast to last night's Spartan accommodation the pros and cons of the difficult question keep me anxiously wakeful.

Wednesday, August 12th.

So scorchingly hot is it this morning that the idea of breakfast indoors cannot be contemplated for a moment. The cool and shady terrace 'chez Robinat' has pleasant memories that irresistibly draw us thither, and on arrival we find the place already packed with 'early birds' similarly bent on the consumption of the al fresco 'worm.' The town is in holiday attire to-day. A collection is being made on behalf of the children of soldiers killed in the war, and the streets are not only gay with flags and wreaths and banners, but also inundated by a flood of damsels clad in 'white samite, mystic, wonderful,' whose methods are as aggressive as their appearance is captivating. They attack one 'not in single spies but in whole battalions,' and only retire to return to the charge more desperately than ever. Before an hour has passed, little linen pansies in red, white and blue (the Russian national colours) have been pinned in swarms all over one's person; and one's pocket, as the result of an exchange which is highway robbery pure and simple, has suffered considerably! But the cause is pathetically appealing, and no one minds in the least the depredations committed in its name. The die is cast! My friend and I have talked things seriously over, and we both agree that the right thing for me to do, in view of the slender chance that offers of continuing our journey within reasonable time as well as of the urgent claims of my vacated Chaplaincy, is to abandon my project of accompanying him home,

and to return at once to Petrograd. He will 'mark time' here for one more day, and, if by the end of that, the 'Mossoul' still remains immobile, he will entrust his fortunes to a Russian steamer that, we are told, is shortly to make the venture of the Dardanelles. This decision having been come to, the best course is to act on it without delay. So we drive down to our ship, extract with much difficulty my trunk from the heap of baggage blocking up the cabin gangways, settle my mess-bill with the purser, satisfy as best we can the surprise and curiosity of our French comrades, deposit goods and chattels at the 'Bristol,' and hurry off for a farewell luncheon at the 'London' with the Consul-General, to whom I entrust before parting various telegrams, not one of which, alas! ever reaches its destination. We hear at the Hotel that the English cruiser 'Amphion' has been sunk by a mine in the North Sea, and that the Germans, disappointed of their prey at Liège, are making straight for Brussels. Before starting out to lunch I have despatched the dvórnik of the 'Bristol' to the railway station, with instructions to purchase me a ticket for Petrograd, and to secure me a seat in a first-class carriage of the 4.20 train. On returning he greets me at the door with assurances that nothing can be managed for me; that no first-class vehicles are running, that every seat in every other compartment is already booked, and that no more tickets to the capital are being issued! A nice state of things, indeed, supposing it to be true, but my impression is that the knave has trousered my tip and has never been nearer to the station than the pavement on which he both 'stands and lies'! As the Consul-General has kindly sent one of his clerks to see me off, and there is no time to be lost, we agree to test the dvórnik's

truthfulness at once by visiting the station ourselves. We have not, we find, suspected him unjustly. True, the train is full—very full; but those statements about the non-existence of first-class carriages and the impossibility of booking to Petrograd are sheer inventions from first to last. A call on the 'natchálnik' in his office; the display of my courier's passport; a few words of appeal backed by the application of a little 'douceur'—and the difficulty is smoothed away instanter. Leaving the clerk to keep the window-seat assigned to me in a compartment already uncomfortably crowded, I drive back 'au grand galop' to the Hotel to collect my luggage—to discover that my portmanteau, so recently recovered from its wanderings on the railway, has mysteriously disappeared! It was lying in the hall but half-an-hour ago; what has become of it since? A frantic search is instituted, and just as I am resigning myself to the prospect of departure without it, it is found in the room occupied by a newly-arrived guest, having been sent up there as, presumably, part of his possessions! I rush back to the 'vokzál,' elbow my way through a mighty press to the registration and ticket offices, lay in a miscellaneous supply of provisions at the buffet, and, with ten minutes to spare, throw myself, hot and breathless, bags, parcels, bottles and all, into my allotted corner, rejoicing in the good fortune that has favoured me so far on my way. We are off punctually to time, but oh! the appalling heat of that crammed and sun-baked carriage! My neighbour for the first four hours is a most portly and perspiring matron, who, practically seated on my lap, divides her attentions between drinking lemonade (?) out of a very doubtful-looking bottle, and suckling an apoplectic baby that yells continuously until

the next 'interval for refreshment' comes round. Opposite is another 'lady,' who has evidently mistaken the compartment for a dressing-room, and gives me an interesting and varied insight into the mysteries of feminine toilet. When presently this trio departs, three large men wedge themselves into the vacant places, and so, more tightly and asphyxiatingly jammed than ever, we pass the comfortless and long-drawn evening. About 10 o'clock a lad appears in the corridor with glasses of tea and 'zakúskas,' of which we all partake, and by 10.30 are trying as best we can in the circumstances to forget our troubles in sleep. Only, I could wish that the snoring gentleman on my left had chosen any other pillow than my shoulder!

Thursday, August 13th.

A day with little history save that of the boredom born of a snail-like crawl and irritatingly tedious waits. The temperature has in no way abated its fury of heat, and suffocation is only avoided by long hours spent standing in the corridor on the shady side. At 8 o'clock, tea and zakúskas—the latter almost uneatably dry—are again brought round, and, dinner last night having been mainly conspicuous for meagreness of menu, the train-boys do a thriving trade. We jog into Zhmérinka at 12.30, where we are treated to a two hours' 'arrêt'; here, the buffet, quite unable to keep abreast of the ceaseless drain on its resources by the masses of soldiery coming, going and staying, can produce nothing more adequate and appetising for luncheon than Nazan water, stale bread, and the most tired-looking ham I have ever struggled to swallow. Here, too, my compartment loses some of its original

occupants, and their place is taken by an unbelievably dirty village priest, his wife, and his married daughter, accompanied by the inevitable and, obviously, teething infant. Poor old fellow, one cannot help feeling sorry for him; for he is both aged and ill, and requires the constant, tender attention of his relatives. But 'godliness' and 'cleanliness' with him are most unpleasantly divorced, and, if one may take as a criterion the looks and whisperings of his fellow-passengers, the Church he represents has acquired no fresh popularity in his person. Whether only peculiar to and tolerated in war-time, I cannot say; but his case illustrates a piece of casualness on the part of the railway authorities, which, to speak from my own experience, is far from uncommon, and certainly constitutes an unwarrantable outrage on the rights of those who have paid first-class fare. If the unwashed, ragged, insect-harbouring 'múzhik,' who is travelling by train, fails to find the accommodation he requires, or fancies, in his green-painted 3rd class carriage, he calmly invades one of the 1st or 2nd class (1st for preference), bringing in with him most of his household goods in the form of elephantine bundles, with which he effectually blocks the fairway of the corridor, and then proceeds to encamp in their vicinity. And—this is the grievance—the officials do nothing to remove him. 'Nitchevó!' is their only attitude, and their only answer to objectors. In such an instance as that of the invalid who has provided the text for this complaint, one can well understand the practice being winked at, but, considering the Russian peasant's incredibly foul condition both of body and of clothes, it does seem a preposterous thing that the hale and hearty of his kind should be permitted in this way to force his unwelcome society on those to whom, with-

out being unduly squeamish, it is an intolerable offence. We reach Kazátin at 7 p.m., where, as my present train is bound for Kiev, I have to change. Can anyone imagine the helplessness—I had almost said, hopelessness—of the man, who, unable to speak one word of Russian, finds himself standing on the platform of a busy junction in the gathering gloom, knowing that from somewhere and at some time or other a train is due to start for his destination, but incapable either of uttering one syllable of enquiry or of understanding a single word of information, should such be forthcoming? After the meagrest of suppers in the station restaurant I sally out to see what can be done. A porter passes me; I stop him—and, happy thought! show him my ticket, pointing to the mystic words printed thereon—'SPBURG VARSH,' which, being interpreted, stands for 'St. Petersburg; Warsaw (station).' He smiles genially, and, better still, nods intelligently, and, taking up my two handbags, beckons to me to follow. Off the end of the platform we step, and in the darkness down the maze of intersecting lines we trudge, until at length there looms in front of me the deeper shadow of an unlit train. To the further end of it we go; my luggage is thrown in at an open door; I am helped to follow it by a mighty push from behind; and, having received the tip he waits for, my well-meaning 'nosílshtchik' disappears. The next moment I am aware of a firm grip laid upon my coat-collar, of a jerk that sends me flying outwards to fall on hands and knees on the dusty line, of two heavy thuds that apprise me of the jettisoning of my bags, and of the insistent slam of a door just overhead! Unfortunately for me, the 'Kondúktor' of the train has happened to be 'at home,' when I called, and he has

made it abundantly clear to me that he is not 'receiving visitors.' Collecting myself and my goods together, I walk off, a good deal bruised and crestfallen, to attempt the entrance of the train at the other end. All I want, indeed, is to be on it anywhere, so that it shall not start without me. But other intending passengers have followed my bad example. They march down in a big company to the scene of my discomfiture, overwhelm the protesting guard by sheer force of numbers, and settle themselves down in the vacant compartments—with the result that, when, having succeeded in boarding the train at the end nearest the engine, I eventually find my way down to the first-class quarters, there is not a single place unfilled! I turn back in despair to the 2nd and 3rd class carriages through which I have just passed, to discover them too already in possession of the crowd that has followed in the wake of my second effort; so that all that remains for me after my pioneering enterprise is a little flap-seat that projects from the wall of the lavatory of the rearmost car, and that is usually occupied by the brakesman! Travelling, especially in Russia, is the best school of practical philosophy I know. 'Quand on n'a pas ce que l'on aime, il faut aimer ce que l'on a,' and, anyhow, it is something to be thankful for that one is on the right train at all. We leave Kazátin about 9 o'clock. If anyone wants a simple prescription for physical malaise, let me recommend a journey on a tiny wooden ledge on a jolting Russian train. After some two hours the aching becomes so acute that I am perforce driven to stand, with the prospect of spending the night in that scarcely restful position. But hardly have I risen to my feet, when a blessed 'deus ex machinâ' appears in the shape of a student in an École Économique in (I believe) Mos-

cow, who, seeing me smoking, comes to borrow a match. Finding he has a smattering of French, I solicit his sympathy with my sorry plight and request his good services on my behalf with the 'Kondúktor.' He returns ere long with the delightful news that one of the first-class passengers is shortly going to get out and that I am to have his place on his departure. 'All's well that ends well.' About midnight I am snugly ensconced, not in a mere seat, but in an upper sleeping berth, and the trials and tribulations of the day have soon passed into dreamless oblivion.

Friday, August 14th.

I rouse myself at 6 a.m., being anxious to be ready for arrival at Rovno, my next destined change of train. As a matter of fact, I need not have worried so much betimes, as we do not reach that place until 10. For miles previously we have been passing 'soldiers, soldiers everywhere,' patrolling the line, encamped in the fields, or marching amid clouds of dust along the rough country roads. And here, at Rovno, we seem to be in the main ant-hill of them, while thousands more pour past each way in fast-succeeding 'convois.' On leaving the train, I hand my bags to a porter, and stroll on to the further platform, where I am immediately challenged by two gendarmes. They address me, of course, in Russian—the usual question, 'What is your nationality and where is your passport?' I reply in French, on the bare chance that they may understand it, and display the document asked for. With it they retire, sending back in their stead a third party, who, to my surprise and joy, speaks to me in tolerable English. Apparently, he is soon satisfied with the truthfulness of my statements, and hurries off to lay the policemen's suspicions

at rest. He confides to me on returning that he is working in co-operation with them; that he has lived some years in Manchester, and that his business at Rovno station is to test in conversation the speech of those who may seem to be other than their passports declare. 'But,' I enquire of him, 'what has been the doubt about myself?' 'Oh,' is his answer, 'your little affair was rather amusing. Your passport is quite "en règle," and your appearance is certainly English, but the gendarmes were considerably disturbed in mind, because they were sure you had replied to their questions *in German*!' What, after that, becomes of the idea that the Russian has so keen a natural ear for music! My new acquaintance has evidently taken a great fancy for me—or else, possibly, his attachment is but a veil for the further scrutiny of my personality and business. Anyhow, he refuses to leave me, and suggests that it might be a good thing, as neither of us has yet breakfasted and there is no chance whatever of a north-bound passenger train departing for some hours, if we stroll down into the town of Rovno and take the meal together in a restaurant he knows of. I readily agree, particularly as no one without authority from the military or the police is allowed to leave the station premises, and it will certainly be interesting to have this privileged peep behind the scenes of a mobilized fortress-town. The less said about that breakfast the better. I tremble to think what the various dishes are composed of; and the wretched man cuts bread for me with his own table-knife, of which, for 'cleaning' purposes, he has previously sucked the blade! But the walk through those narrow, hilly, ill-kept streets, with their great creaking waggons of forage, their trotting regiments of horsemen, their serpentining columns of

marching infantry, their medley of movement and noise —and smells!—I should have been sorry indeed to miss. Judging by appearances every other civilian one meets is a Jew—and a seedy one at that. However, to a Rovno Jew I owe the procuring of an unlooked-for luxury, which just now is to me somewhat of a medical necessity. I mention to my cicerone, incidentally, that this hot weather has had rather a deleterious effect upon my general well-being, and, that a drop of brandy—alas! unobtainable in war-time—is all that is needed to make 'Richard' quite 'himself again.' 'Brandy, my dear sir?' is his response, 'why, nothing easier!' Just follow me,—and look innocent!' A wine shop, whose formidable shutters of iron network seem an impenetrable barrier to the hopes of any customer, soon appears on the other side. We cross the road, and tap at a little side-door set in the wall a bit further down. It silently and mysteriously opens, and we walk down a long dark passage, which ultimately leads into the very premises outwardly so inexorably closed, and where behind the counter there stands, rubbing expectant hands, the most affable of Hebrews, ready to sell me any of his forbidden wares I like to name—at a price! My purchase of half a bottle only of 'Three Star' brandy seems to disappoint him, but he has his revenge, the rascal, in charging me more than three times the market value for it. However, at any price the medicine is cheap, and if my coat seems to bulge somewhat unwontedly as we emerge once more into the blazing sunshine—well, am not I already in the hands of an accredited agent of police? We get back to the station about 12.30, half-baked by the tropical heat, and I am peremptorily ordered to 'intern' myself in the restaurant, in which, apparently, all the rest of the

trainful from Kazátin have been stifling since arrival. Two sturdy little soldiers armed with bayonets escort me to the door, which they immediately lock from outside. There are not half enough seats for the crowd of folk herein immured, and the floor is practically 'unnavigable' for piles of luggage interspersed with squatting or sprawling forms. Every window being shut, words fail me to describe an atmospheric condition whose principal constituents seem old clothes and tobacco smoke. We have been promised a train to Vilna at 4 o'clock, and at 3, buoyed with hopes of approaching release from durance vile, are dining sumptuously off water and 'zakúskas,' when an officer comes into the buffet and shouts something I am unable to understand, but which turns out to be the desolating announcement that 'for reasons of military necessity' the train due to leave directly has had to be cancelled, and that it is impossible to say when another is likely to be despatched;—anyhow, at earliest, it cannot be until 9 p.m.! Five more hours of this heartbreaking detention! What on earth shall we do with ourselves? I have already read Baedeker's 'Russia' from cover to cover, and now turn for the third time to the little bookstall close to which I am enthroned on my suitcase, on the bare chance of finding something purchasable for perusal other than Russian 'gazétas' and novels. No wonder I have overlooked it before, for there, brown with dust, ragged and broken-backed, in an obscure corner it lies—a French translation of H. G. Wells', 'The First Men in the Moon!' As a thirsty man grasps at the proffered water-bottle, even so with eager hands do I snatch up my prize, and am soon soaring 'afar from the sphere of my sorrow' on the wings of adventurous Romance. Great is the excite-

ment at 7.30. A train clanks in from the south—and an ordinary passenger train too, although no one is in it! What is it? No one seems to know. Can it possibly be the 9 p.m. in disguise? Anyhow, is it going on Vilna-wards? The authorities are not long in settling that point, and, in so doing, bring down our expectations to the nadir of despair. It is not the 9 p.m., for the excellent reason that that train, like its predecessors, has also been expunged from the list of 'probable starters,' and we had better begin to make up our minds for an all-night sitting in the buffet! At last, however, sorely-strained patience has reached its breaking point. Preposterous it is that we should be compelled to submit to these continual disappointments. Let the Commandant realize without delay that even civilian 'worms will turn!' Four men get leave from our custodians to interview him; they return shaking their heads and shrugging their shoulders. Charm they never so wisely, the man, they report, refuses to be talked into reasonableness. One last resource suggests itself—will *the ladies* try the effect of their wheedlings on his iron obstinacy? Half a dozen of these latter instantly volunteer for the fray, disappear through the guarded door, and for the next quarter of an hour surmise is busy as to possible developments. Presently the deputation comes back, fairly satisfied with the success that has rewarded its efforts, but having prevailed so far, the ladies are determined to win more concessions yet. The Commandant has already capitulated to the extent that we are not only free now to come out on to the platform, but to go and sit in the train that is still alongside, if we care to. We do both—but now we are here, in these comfortable carriages, why should we not sleep in them? Yes, we may, is the outcome of a second

venture into the lion's den; only, if any shunting has to be done, we must disembark at once, and no lights can be allowed in the compartments. Our gains are speedily consolidated by a general rush for the train, but, once more, could not this success be even further improved on? The Commandant—unwisest of men—steps out of his office to take the air, and is straightway pounced upon by our band of lady desperadoes. The train, it informs him, has all its passengers on board; well, then, will it hurt it, does he think, to run a bit along the line towards Vilna, instead of stopping idle in the station all night? The request is so frankly impertinent that it administers the coup de grâce to any powers of resistance that the man has left. It is the parable of the Importunate Widow enacted once again. In sheer self-defence the boon is granted; orders are forthwith given; an engine couples on; candles begin to glimmer in the carriages; the station gong thumps out its three clamorous strokes—and, miracle of miracles, at 10.40 we actually start creeping out of our prison northwards. I am lucky indeed in those whom I find sharing my compartment. One is a Russian civil engineer from Moscow, a most interesting and widely-travelled man, just back from breezy experiences in the Caucasus, who speaks English admirably. The others—a Russian lady and her family, who also, chiefly the mother, know something of my native tongue. She tells me that she had watched me in the Rovno buffet, wondering who I might be, until at last the conviction had been forced on her that I was an actor and no gentleman; 'an actor,' because of my 'mobile, clean-shaven face'(!); and 'no gentleman,' because I had elected to sit myself down near a benchful of Jews, with the added degradation of amusing a little

boy of that nationality by blowing for him rings of tobacco smoke.

Saturday, August 15th.

A considerably cooler day, with bright sunshine. The night has been much of the usual sort, many stoppings and re-startings making sleep somewhat difficult. Towards the early hours two Russian officers find their way into my compartment—the one, a regimental doctor; the other, an infantry captain. Curiously enough, they are both well acquainted with the lady, whose views as to my profession and social standing have already been given, and as they can talk French of a kind, we form quite a festive, chatty little party. The captain keeps us in roars of laughter with his incessant badinage; I have never met a man of such rollicking animal spirits, or one more dowered with the happy (or unhappy) gift of seeing the humorous side of everything. His admiration for England and all things English amounts to a veritable passion, and in this his sentiments are by no means moderately shared by the doctor. In the last 'wagon' of the train some dozen or more young officer cadets are travelling back to their training school at Krásnoe Seló. The captain, being theoretically in charge of these, fetches them all in at the next stoppage of the train to be introduced to me. It is very good of him, but I do not know which are the more embarrassed—the lads, who are trying to make the remarks appropriate to such an occasion in words that to me have no meaning whatever; or myself, who am attempting to respond to the politeness I am sure they are uttering in a language which is to them 'vox et praeterea nihil.' However, there is much nodding

and smiling and hand-shaking, with occasional interpretations for both sides by the Russian lady, and it is not long before we are all on the most cordial of terms. I hear that, as the highest compliment it is in their power to pay me, I have been dubbed 'Chamberlain' by common consent! The day wears on, rather more quickly than usual by reason of everybody's friendly gaiety. At 3 we halt at Lida, where the railway restaurant is ransacked for anything that may furnish the semblance of a meal—but with signally inadequate results—and at 4 we set out on the last stretch of eighty-nine versts that still divides us from Vilna. About five miles short of this latter place we come to a stop, and, it being whispered that there is very little chance of proceeding for some time, the whole train empties itself on to the line to make the most of a superbly fine evening in strolling about, flower-picking, etc. 'My' cadets present themselves in a body with—so it is explained to me—a demand to be amused. I can think of nothing quite so suitable to the occasion as that most violent and exhausting of games known, I believe, as 'Tig,' and soon the edifying spectacle is to be witnessed of an English clergyman, either pursued or pursuer, tearing madly up and down the sandy line, racing up the sides of cuttings, slithering down embankments, and charging into astonished and hugely entertained knots of onlookers, with every youth and child in the train joining in the sport to the extent of getting hopelessly and disastrously in the way! The officer-lads enjoy themselves like a parcel of lunatic schoolboys, and confide to me through our mutual interpreter, when warning whistles from the engine send us scurrying back to our carriages, dusty, breathless and bathed in perspiration, that henceforth no long

railway journey will be considered by them 'complete' should no chance be provided in it of a similar relaxation. We creep along slowly for the next few versts, and then, just as in the distance ahead the outlying suburbs of Vilna are appearing, a sudden swerve is made off the main line, and we bring up 'all standing' in a little siding that, abutting on to a coal-yard, looks like 'the end of nowhere.' Here, we are peremptorily bidden to get out, bag and baggage, and make the best of our way by road to the station. The reason for this annoying performance on the part of the railway authorities transpires later. The entrance into Vilna from the south is completely blocked by Red Cross trains full of wounded: the station, therefore, can only be approached by driving in from the western or northern parts of the town. Darkness is fast closing in, and it is not a very pretty predicament we find ourselves in as we scramble down from the carriages, stumble, luggage in hand, across a wide piece of black and broken cobble-stones, and emerge, eventually, on a miserable slum-street, with no living soul visible in it. However, even as the crowd that starts up out of nothing at the scene of a street-accident, and as the eagle that hieth him from the desert's rim to where lies the hapless creature that, presently, is to provide him with a luscious luncheon, so, materialized by like mysterious process, and impelled on his errand by a hardly less voracious instinct, is the Russian 'izvóshtchik,' when Fortune favours him with prospective fares, both plentiful and—helpless! Where they spring from, who can surmise? But we have not stood long in the drizzle, whose commencement has characteristically synchronized with our remoteness from all possibility of shelter, when the silence is rudely broken by the sound

of clattering wheels and of the furious driving of many Jehus, and lo! a small fleet of dróshkies has 'risen from the ranks' at our service. To be strictly true, the race for plunder is won by a large railway-lorry, which is instantly annexed by a dozen or so of 'ours,' and a comical picture indeed do they make, as, having piled the centre of the lumbering vehicle high with handbags and other 'contraptions,' they roll off Vilnawards, all sitting along its outer sides, with legs dangling and hands feverishly clutching the overhanging edges to prevent forcible bodily removal through the irregularities (!) of the road. My Russian friend most sympathetically suggests that I should stay with her as one of the family party, as in such circumstances as the present the indefiniteness of an Abrahamic journey for a solitary, tongue-tied Englishman cast adrift at night among the purlieus of an unknown town is not a risk it is advisable to run. Very damp and draggled are we, when, after a dismal and seemingly interminable drive, we draw up some three-quarters of an hour later before the fine, brilliantly-lighted façade of Vilna station. The usual confusion reigns both without and within. Porters? They simply are not. Railway officials?—anyone who is likely to know anything about the prospects of our journey's continuance? They are, presumably, to be found, 'rari nantes in gurgite vasto,' enveloped and hidden in the flood of soldiery that surges and eddies overwhelmingly within the great junction's precincts. But search for them would be useless. 'Our strength is to sit still.' There must be a north-bound train presently; meanwhile, let us take the hint of the not too crowded buffet close at hand and in one practical way, at least, prepare for the future. Well it is that we adopt that wisely philosophic view, for we have

scarcely finished the invariable tea and 'zakúska' banquet, when our good cadets come rushing in to inform the party generally that a train from Warsaw to Petrograd is due in at 9.45, and to invite me in particular to share their reserved 'wagon' for the remainder of the trip. Grateful tidings, indeed, and a kindly offer! We are soon on the platform, to find it already thronged with a multitude bent on travelling with—if not, instead of—us! The big train rumbles into the station practically up to time, and we see to our dismay, as it slows down, that it is even now unpromisingly full. 'My' lads carry me off with them to the last vehicle, and I am about to instal myself thankfully in its somewhat Spartan third-class accommodation, when the captain, who has been hitherto absent, comes in to tell me, with many expressions of regret, that he dare not grant the hospitality of a carriage that has been retained for his party by Government, and that, alas! I must seek shelter elsewhere. Out I jump in a flash, for there is not a moment to lose; tear up and down the train only to realize that from end to end it is packed like a herring-barrel; 'tang! tang! tang!' goes the signal to start; the wheels begin to turn—and, in despair, I throw my heavy bags in at the first open corridor-end that passes me, and follow them headlong myself. Well, that is something—not to have been left behind; but it is far from enough. There are certain 'flap-seat' memories that spring unpleasantly to mind, and at any cost they shall not be repeated. I must find room in a compartment somehow. A glance into the very next one to me reveals two vacant places. 'Mine not to reason why; mine but to do or die!' In one of these I instantly plant myself. The rightful tenants of both presently return—they have been stretching legs in the corridor.

I get a somewhat enquiring look from both; a glance passes from one to the other; and they squeeze themselves in by my side without a word! Such a blessed power of benediction for others resides in the doctrine of 'Nitchevó!' There are now nine of us in the carriage, but the pressure is soon lightened by the removal of themselves by two of the company into upper berths; and, before an hour is sped, another vacancy is created by the disappearance of a wounded Colonel just back from the front, who, poor fellow, seems sadly indisposed, and never returns to his seat. I hear later that a Good Samaritan has surrendered a sleeping-berth to him elsewhere. So we settle down for the night not too uncomfortably, after all. But our slumbers are not long-lived. For, at 2 a.m., a very Niagara of rain descends upon us, accompanied by a hurricane of wind, and the roaring of the gale, and the thunderous drumming of the sluicing downpour on the carriage roof soon dispel the sleep we have hitherto been hopefully courting. At a station where we halt towards early morning the news comes in that, shortly after we had left Vilna, a serious accident—a collision, I believe—occurred to a military train quite near that place, with considerable loss of life. In view of the extraordinary congestion of traffic I had witnessed there, the catastrophe is scarcely surprising. My vis à vis in the carriage are two Russian ladies in deep black, who, speaking French fairly well, tell me with tears in their eyes that they are returning to Petrograd after seeing their husbands depart from Vilna for the front. Rather an emotional contrast, methinks, to the jovial spirits of 'my' captain of cadets, who is even now on his way to fight in Eastern Prussia, and had only been married one hour before he left home!

Sunday, August 16th.

This was to have been my last day of Chaplain's duty in Petrograd before returning to England! 'L'homme propose . . .'! And here I am, instead, due to arrive there to-night, with an, apparently, unlimited spell of residence in front of me. So far as incident goes, this Sunday has but one particular history. We reach Dvinsk at 8.45, and have just time to rush out for a glass of tea and a few 'zakúkas.' Here, in the buffet, I meet again the cadets, who have been wondering what may have become of me since my leaving them last night. I reveal to them my whereabouts, with the result that they feel it their duty to pay me intermittent visits all through the morning hours 'just to see that all's well.' At Ryézhitza, which we 'make' at 12.15, and where a bread and water luncheon is the highest flight to which the resources of the restaurant can rise, these delightfully friendly young fellows, this time accompanied by their captain, present themselves with a definite proposal. They have been thinking things over, and would very much like to feel before reaching their journey's end that they have been able to give some expression of their extreme admiration and affection for England by means of a small tribute of regard offered to myself. Would I, therefore, be inclined to travel with them in their special 'wagon' as far as the next big station, Pskov, a distance of some 160 versts? If so, they will do their best to entertain me with music. The suggestion is such a touchingly 'pretty' one, and the motive underlying it so thoughtfully gracious, that I assent to it gladly and at once. It is not merely that here is rather a uniquely pleasant opportunity of escaping the boredom of the

next few hours, but it is an occasion romantically glorified by all the strong and tender significance it bears. If the arising of it warms me with a glow of honest pride to have been born an Englishman, it also makes the deepest heart of me go out in love for these generous young soldiers, whose simple-souled purpose of doing honour to my country in the best and only way they can is revealed in the promise extracted from me by their captain that when presently I shall return home I shall not forget to tell this tale of a moving little incident 'that, Sir, we wish you to understand, is but a tiny demonstration of the gratitude and devotion that all Russia feels towards your great and glorious land.' It is really a wonderful entertainment to which I find myself invited; wonderful, not only by reason of the variety and interest of the programme itself, but also for the revelation it affords of the musical gifts and taste and feeling which are the natural heritage of the Slav. Songs we have—and songs galore; airs from Opera, quaint Russian volkslieds, mournful Tartar melodies, crooning Cossack love-ditties; all so tunefully, joyously, un-selfconsciously given that it is a treat no less delightful to watch than to listen. They never seem to tire, those youngsters, in what to them is so obviously a pleasure; and the charm and interest of the long hours spent this afternoon in a bare, cushionless railway carriage, while that little khaki-clad, impromptu concert-party is giving me of its best (for dear old England's sake) in solo and in chorus, will ever remain an imperishable memory with me. I endeavour to express something of my appreciation and enjoyment of their efforts in a brief speech in French, which is duly translated by the captain, and received with tumultuous applause. 'Proceedings' appropriately 'conclude,' just

as we are near Pskov at 5 p.m., with stentorian renderings of the Russian Hymn and 'God save the King.' After Pskov, I return to my own compartment, and the rest of the day is monotonously featureless as is the flat and dreary scenery through which we jolt. At Luga, where we arrive at 9.25, we make a considerable halt, but any hopes I may have cherished on the subject of supper here are effectually extinguished by the presence of three huge troop-trains in the station, which renders the buffet entirely inaccessible. Bits of stale bread that date from Vilna and half a bottle of tepid water can scarcely be described as a comforting 'pis aller!' There are, however, unsuspected powers of survival in a reefed waist-belt, and, though 'faint,' I am still 'pursuing' when the Warsaw terminus at Petrograd is reached at 2 a.m., in a perfect deluge of rain. Infinitely weary? Ravenously hungry? Yes, indeed, and naturally! But one feeling alone at this moment transcends every other—that of an infinite and rejoicing thankfulness to know that, anyhow for a while, the strain and tedium and 'res angustae' of war-time railway travel in Russia are things of the past and that one is once more in a solid, unshifting land of beds and meals and streets and spaciousness. At such a late hour as this to hunt for one's registered luggage—even supposing it to have followed one so far—would be absurd. A 'nosílshtchik' secures my two bags; a taxi flies up at his hail—and, in the twinkling of an eye, I am heading at a truly alarming speed towards the Hôtel Astoria, where my troubles and wants are soon forgotten in the most comfortable of rooms and the society of a plate of sandwiches.

Monday, August 17th.

It is a big, well-appointed Hotel, this, in which I find myself located. Its situation at the point where the Morskáya runs into St. Isaac's Square is an ideal one, and in other days I had known it always full to overflowing. Now, however, there is hardly a guest in the place. The reason is explained to me presently. At the time of the outbreak of the war, the Hotel was in the hands of a German syndicate; in fact, everything in it was German—manager, clerks, porters, waiters, servants. Directly hostilities began, the police swept down upon this nest of the enemy, marched off all its staff for internment and locked the doors behind them. An enterprising French company then took over the property, and threw it open once more to the public. But a dog's bad name clings to him, in spite of all change of ownership. The taint of the German still lingered in those 'marble halls,' and very slowly indeed was a clientèle beginning to be tempted back into scenes, where till lately the unspeakable Teuton had 'ruled the roost' and had waxed prosperous on Russian roubles. One thing, however, does not seem changed with the transference of proprietorship—the exorbitance of its charges. The most unpretentious of bedrooms on the top storey is 10/- a night, and, if all meals are taken on the premises, one is lucky to escape with a daily expenditure of 25/-, without reckoning tips! This will not do 'en permanence'; so the first thing to do this morning is to look out for cheaper lodgings without delay. I telephone to my late host in the Galérnaya, but find him alas! unable to accommodate me, as in my absence other friends have taken my place. Happy thought! Why not claim a Chaplain's privilege, and ask the

Church authorities for permission to reside in one of the clergy's empty suites of rooms? Again, the telephone is requisitioned, with the result that my suggestion is readily acceded to, and the Clerk is bidden to take immediate steps for my reception as soon as I care to move in. I could not wish for any better arrangement; for not only thereby will my purse be spared a serious drain on its resources, but also will residence at clerical headquarters prove itself the greatest possible of conveniences. After lunch I ring up the Embassy to announce my return, and am bidden by the Chief to report myself to him at 3 p.m. In walking through the city one cannot but notice what a very little difference, apparently, the fact and pressure of war have made to a capital so remotely distant from the frontier-struggles. One can scarcely say in truth that the military are much more in evidence than usual; for ordinarily both officers and men form a very large portion of the crowd in the streets. Most of that multitude, for whom, reservists and regulars alike, Petrograd was a fortnight ago the appointed rendezvous, have ere now departed westwards, and if it were not for the bulletins posted up in certain windows and being hawked about on single fly-sheets by the ubiquitous 'gazétchiks,' with the added suggestiveness, perhaps, of the signs of abnormal activity that obtrude themselves in the vicinity of the General Staff offices in the Winter Palace Square, it would be hard indeed to persuade oneself that anything out of the common was afoot. The host of promenaders is just as large and fashionable and festive as ever; no less ceaseless is the 'va et vient' of carriages and motor cars; the restaurants are full of gaily-dressed women and their escorts; the shops are doing a thriving trade.

But light-heartedly unconcerned though the public may show themselves for the threat of the enemy outside the gates, keen, suspicious eyes are everywhere alert for his unwelcome presence within the walls. Just as I leave my hotel, a man walking down the Morskáya is arrested in front of me and carried off, struggling and protesting, in a dróshky; while, further along, near the end of the Nevsky, a similar fate descends on a luckless individual as he is leaving a tram-car. It is a very busy scene that greets me on arrival at the Embassy. A working-party is being held for the making of clothes for wounded Russian soldiers, and the great drawing-room, strangely metamorphosed by rows of long trestle tables, is full of lady members of the English Colony, hard at it with needle, scissors and sewing-machine, under the personal superintendence of the Ambassadress and her daughter. Not only English, however, are they who are thus giving their services to the good cause, but the highest society in Petrograd is represented here as well. Conspicuous among these latter is a sweet little Princess aged seven, who, seated by her English governess, is intently engaged in tearing up old newspapers wherewith to stuff pillows for use in the military hospitals. The Ambassador comes in presently and carries me off into his sanctum to hear the story of my adventures. It is a great relief to find that he entirely agrees with the wisdom of my decision to return to duty at Petrograd, and, apparently, he is not in the least surprised to learn of the 'impasse' at Odessa that was the cause of my acting as I did. He has to leave for Moscow to-night by special train to attend an official reception to be held there by the Tsar, and invites me to accompany him on a long walk by way of preparation for the tedious twelve hours' jour-

ney. I notice, as we go along, that all the hotels, restaurants and shops which lately flaunted a German proprietorship on their frontages now possess designations suggestive of their owner's sympathy with the allied cause. Only, it strikes one as, to say the least, a little inconsistent with profession on the part of some of the restaurants in question that the bills of fare exhibited at their entrances should still make their announcements openly and unblushingly in the language of the hated Hun! Another striking change, too, for which war-time is responsible becomes obvious as we come back along the Quays. So far as traffic is concerned, the Neva is practically dead. Gone are the busy tugs, the big, unwieldy barges mountainously-packed with freights of fire-wood, the clumsy Finnish sailing craft, the high-bowed, rusty tramp-steamers that used to lie at the docks below the Nikoláevski Bridge. With the exception of the little 'bateaux mouches' that still ply up and down the stream there is hardly a symptom now of the bustling life that formerly was so picturesquely characteristic of the great, brown, swift-running river. I ask in vain for news. Nothing seems to be coming through but the scrappiest uncertainties. A battle has, apparently, been fought between French and Germans 'on a fifty versts' front,' and there are rumours of a naval tussle in which French and Austrian squadrons have been engaged; but no details are forthcoming, and results are not so much as hinted at. One piece of intelligence, however, does transpire that is suggestive of possibilities for the future. England is no longer inaccessible from the east. Archangel, it is true, will soon be ice-bound, but the door which was closed to me earlier in the month is—or something like it—now quite available as a loophole of escape. Fin-

land, Stockholm, Christiania, Bergen, Newcastle;—the trip is a long and slow one. German cruisers are lurking in the Gulf of Bothnia; the North Sea is plentifully sown with floating mines; but both for leaving and returning the route is being regularly used, and hitherto with singular immunity from contretemps. Such tidings at least raise the hope that one of the absent chaplains will soon take advantage of the opportunity, and release me for a sporting chance of making my way home. A cold rain sets in after tea, and continues to fall heavily for the rest of the evening, so I dine in the Hotel with one of the Embassy staff who is resident there, and we are joined later on over our coffee by the American Chargé d'Affaires, a strong-looking, sensible man, and the most entertaining of companions.

Tuesday, August 18th.

Autumn seems to have settled in at last, chilly, blustery and grey; climatic conditions scarcely calculated to commend themselves to one, who, like myself, has awakened in the clutches of a heavy cold. After breakfast I walk down to the English Church and find there one of the Churchwardens, who is busily engaged in paying out the weekly doles received by certain deserving widows in the English Colony, and with whom I make all arrangements as to Sunday's services, etc. Fortunately in my absence the 'sheep' have not been left entirely un-shepherded, for this excellent man, who holds a lay-reader's licence, has been able to carry on a considerable part of the Church work. I am thankful to feel that now I am able to relieve him of much of the responsibility, of which the burden has been so cheerfully accepted, and, as I hear, the duties so admirably performed. The Chaplain's apartments

placed at my disposal are situate immediately over the porchway by which the Church premises are entered from the Galérnaya—a long flat of inter-connecting rooms, that, if it were not for the darkening effect of the lofty buildings opposite, would provide a by no means unagreeable habitation. However, to examine 'a gift horse' over-critically 'in the mouth' is alike impolite and ungrateful; and I am presently to discover that the kindly little Russian maid commissioned to look after my welfare, who both understands and speaks a modicum of English, not only has a real genius for economical catering, but is also a past mistress in the art of making one feel contentedly and cosily at home. Everything will be in readiness for me to come into residence to-morrow night.

If the saying counts for anything, it may be presumed that the price of 'coals' at 'Newcastle' does not err on the side of excess. The hypothesis does not universally apply; at any rate it breaks down miserably in the case of caviare in Russia. A friend and I learn this to our cost this afternoon in a restaurant in the Nevsky. It seemed such an obvious thing to do, with that tempting pile of the dainty facing us on the 'zakúska' table, to preface our lunch with a couple of 'portions' thereof. What if alien eyes gaze wonderingly at us as in all innocence we order the little treat? What if the waiter brings those two unpretentious helpings to us as if he were bearing the regalia to his sovereign? What if other 'tchelovyéks' stand by to watch the simple homage we pay to the attractions of their national delicacy? It is good—it is, in fact, uncommonly good! But, still, why this sympathetic interest aroused in our proceedings? It is not long before we learn the reason. It appears that this 'ikrá' so beloved of the gourmet is

put on the market in two forms and qualities. The one—the cheap (and nasty)—squashed and flattened into a sort of black cake ; the other—the fresh roe served 'au naturel'—a 'hors d'oeuvre,' which even in the land of the sturgeon is absurdly expensive. All unsuspectingly we have selected the plutocrat's edition, and have the privilege, in consequence, of paying for our folly on a separate bill to the tune of 4/- apiece. Coming back to the Hotel, we assist at the final act of a scene, whose exciting comedy might easily have had a tragic termination. A taxi-cab has swung out of the Nevsky at the usual breakneck speed; has tried to turn the corner into the street that runs along the Yekaterininski Canal; and, failing to negotiate the sharp angle successfully, with a terrific crash and splash has leapt headlong into the foul, brown waters below! The driver jumps out during the descent, and crawls out presently like a drowned rat by the help of some steps hard by. His two luckless male passengers, who have disappeared momentarily in the boiling, foaming stream, are to be seen directly afterwards clinging for dear life to the unsubmerged roof of the vehicle, whence they are rescued ere long in a small punt that happens to be moored not far away, and drive off in a dróshky, none the worse, apparently, for their involuntary ducking. We leave the immense crowd that has assembled to be entertained by the efforts of a gang of stalwarts, who are trying to lift the unfortunate taxi out of the canal by means of ropes—a task, which they eventually succeed in accomplishing. The weather is not sufficiently attractive this afternoon to make out-of-door exercise either a pleasure or a duty. So we seek the sheltered solace of a cinematograph theatre, where the only drawback to a really excellent display is the strict pro-

hibition of smoking. A rule prevails in the Russian army that no cadet may sit down in the presence of his superior officer without permission. As there happen to be a good many of both these military grades at the show in question, it is distinctly amusing to notice how at the turning up of the lights at the end of each set of pictures the cadets spring to their feet in a flash, and with what alacrity, when the place is once more in darkness, they fall back as one man into their seats! Dinner to-night can scarcely be chronicled a success. From praiseworthy motives of economy I select for the purpose a big 'snack' restaurant in the Gorókhavaya, where I find the long, pillared, low-ceilinged hall absolutely crammed from end to end with a noisy multitude, dimly visible through drifting clouds of tobacco smoke. Not a table is vacant, but there is ample standing room at the refreshment counter. Why even that amount of empty space where elsewhere all is so thickly populated? I am not left to wonder long. A request at the close of my frugal meal for a 'stakán píva' wherewith to wash it down is greeted by the barman with an emphatic shake of the head. Again, why this strange refusal to serve me with a harmless glass of beer where so many are being consumed at the tables all around? My next-door neighbour explains in atrocious broken French that, thanks to an edict lately promulgated, alcoholic drinks are only obtainable at a buffet by those who can find a seat whereon to imbibe them! Fortunately, not all the chairs in the lounge of the 'Astoria' are occupied on my return!

Wednesday, August 19th.

To-day, being the Festival of the Transfiguration, is one of the chief national holidays of the year, and very

early the booming of the bells is calling the faithful to their devotions. As I start out soon after 9 a.m. to conduct a service of intercession at the English Church the streets and the tram-cars are already full of folk, mainly of the working class order, all clad in their Sunday best, and, laden with baskets or parcels of provisions, hurrying off to one or other of the distant railway stations en route for the sea-side or the country. Atmospherically, it is scarcely a day on which the prudent would think of venturing far from home; for the wind is bitterly cold, and tremendously heavy clouds, with a certain sickly hollowness in the fitful sunlight, give most unmistakable warning of wet presently to come. But holidays and excursions are inseparably associated in the public mind, and as to a possible soaking in store for those who are 'keeping the Feast' in the traditional way—well, 'Nitchevó! I suppose that it is the infection of this universal philosophy of recklessness that is responsible in the case of a friend and myself for the resolve to follow suit with the crowd as soon as our morning's business is over. Endeavours, however, to procure an early lunch before starting have a somewhat unsatisfactory result. Everywhere the restaurants are shut; all remain so, in spite of our repeated knockings, save one, where a slovenly, shirt-sleeved waiter informs us that a request for food at such an hour (11.45) is ridiculous, as on 'jours de fête' no meals are ever served before one o'clock. The only premises that do not seem to be suffering from holiday closure are those of the notorious Café Central, in the Nevsky, where, alongside of the most temptingly furnished of 'zakúska' counters, our needs are soon forgotten. Our destination this afternon is Kurort, one of those picturesque little villages on the Gulf of Finland, which, largely

composed of dátchas, are in the summer-time the residence of many of the business-folk of Petrograd. Easily accessible by rail, delightfully countrified with their green lanes and shady, sweet-smelling pine woods, and open on an unlimited stretch of shore-line to the invigorating sea-breezes of the Gulf, they form an ideal resort for tired toilers of the city, when the day's or the week's work is done. Starting from the Nevsky, the first part of the journey is a long but by no means uninteresting tram-ride across the Islands to Nóvaya Derévnya ('the new village'), a riverside settlement of the familiar bungalow type. Hence a light railway takes one through a desolate district of heath-land and swamp to Lakhta, perhaps the most popular of all the local holiday haunts, and then by various small hamlets nestling amid deep woods of larch and fir to its terminus at the more pretentious watering-place for which we are just now making—a run of some hour and a quarter. The chief attraction at Kurort is, of course, the Kurhaus —a large, showy building placed right down upon the sea-shore, well equipped with the accessories characteristic of such establishments, a good concert hall, refreshment rooms, a prettily laid out garden and an imposing-looking terrace. Our arrival at the station is the signal for the outbreak of the threatened deluge. Down comes the rain in torrents, with a north-easterly squall at its back to drive the scud in blinding sheets that completely obliterate the view. But in half an hour the fury of the storm is spent, and we venture out of our shelter for a long stroll along a beach, whose unrelieved dreariness is scarcely made more tolerable by the masses of gnarled and broken driftwood that in unsightly wreckage strew the shingle as far as the eye can see. This coast-line of the Finnish Gulf must,

obviously, have a real beauty and attractiveness of its own under conditions of fine, warm weather to account for its immense popularity among the trippers of Petrograd and the vicinity. In such circumstances as the present, however, they are certainly not discernible. Inland, as I have pointed out, there are features of simple natural charm, which at any time provide a restful and delicious contrast to the 'brick and mortar' monotony of town surroundings. But, honestly, so far as the actual shore is concerned, it would be difficult to imagine anything much more unalluring than its aspect of to-day. A leaden, tumbling sea, beating sullenly on a narrow strip of stained and jagged stones; to the left, the dark frown of lashing pine-woods, marshalled on a jutting spit of land that blocks out the neighbouring bay; to the right, the skeleton of a battered wooden pier, with, at its nearer end, a dilapidated log-built hut, standing on piles in the midst of the plunging breakers; and, beyond them, an endless succession of wind-gnawed sand dunes that gradually merge themselves into a low horizon of stunted trees and shallow, curving cliff. It is not a scene that pictorially seems to have one redeeming element in it; a vision of forlornness, framed in the dismal drab of weeping skies, that is calculated to strike depression into the least susceptible of souls. More heavy rain, and then, the weather considerately clearing, we set out, after a glass of tea at the Kurhaus buffet, to tramp the two miles or so that intervene between Kurort and the adjacent little village of Sestroryétzk, whence a return train may be taken to Petrograd. It is curious to note in this latter place what arrangements have had to be made in order to give to bathers who are able and wishful to swim the chance of indulging in their sport. The seaward slope of the shore being so very

gradual, one may wade out some 200 yards or more and still find oneself in one's depth. To obviate this drawback, extraordinarily long timber causeways have been built out into the water, with, at the ends of them, further stagings to left and right supporting rows of white painted cabins. At this distance from the beach not only swimming but diving can be safely practised to the heart's content, and it is not unsuggestive of the popularity of this ingenious expedient that the causeways should be so fashioned as to allow of the passage along them of but one person at a time. The outgoing and incoming traffic is regulated by sidings placed at intervals along the whole length of the structure. While we are waiting for the train at the station my clerical collar again provokes a good deal of embarrassing attention at the hands of the holiday-making crowd, but as their interest and curiosity do not go to further lengths than the usual stares and nudges and whisperings no great harm is done. We arrive at Petrograd amid the bombardment of a furious thunderstorm, and, in view of the streaming wet, decide, on reaching the hotel once more, to dine there in luxury for the last time. They tell me at the bureau that letters from England have been brought over for me from my late lodgings. Letters, forsooth! Cruel, indeed, the disappointment! It is my first bitter experience of a mystery that not once only again is to dash my hopes to the ground. On what principle of selection can it have become possible that newspapers should be delivered by the post with fairly consistent regularity, while of the precious epistles one is longing to receive from home and friends, very few indeed, unless they are addressed to the Embassy, succeed in getting through? Even more strange yet, perhaps, and certainly, equally

exasperating, is the treatment of telegrams by the authorities. Why, one wonders, should it be quite easy to have messages sent to one and practically hopeless to despatch them? Since the war began every wire from the home-country has arrived without fail, and yet, out of, at least, six handed in at the post-offices of Odessa and Petrograd, and paid for at extravagant rates, only two, as I learn later, are transmitted to their English destination. It is an anomaly, this, that, no doubt, has a sufficient explanation, but it is one, none the less, that is responsible for a good deal of anxiety among those who wait in vain for the tidings that never reach them. It is not pleasant to hear, on returning eventually to Oxford, that, through no fault whatever of my own, the local journals have for the last three weeks been reporting me as 'missing!' A cold, thick drizzle is falling as we leave the 'Astoria' at 10.30 for our new quarters at the English Church, but the drive is quite a short one, and there is ample compensation at the other end of it for a thoroughly uncomfortable day in the warm welcome and brightly cosy rooms that greet us on arrival.

Thursday, August 20th.

A wretchedly chill, grey, windy day, with occasional heavy showers. My cold has been so much aggravated by yesterday's stormy experiences at Kurort that, after taking the mid-weekly celebration of the Holy Communion at 8.15, I determine, if possible, to spend the rest of the day indoors. The resolve is scarcely a successful one, although, so far as the morning is concerned, it is passed pleasantly enough among the books of the big library that occupies the whole front length

of the Church premises immediately above my rooms. By the way, the inner courtyard of the aforesaid premises presents just now a rather extraordinary spectacle. It is the time of the year when all wise householders arrange for the supply of their fire-wood for the long winter months, and the Church authorities are certainly taking the hint of the season with a vengeance! Not only are the great sheds on either side of the quadrangle piled high and full with fuel, but practically the whole of its ground-space is hidden beneath the neatly-sawn pine billets which, stacked above the level of one's head in long, broad lines, have passage-ways left between them for the use of Church-goers and others. Possibly, later on, room is somewhere found for the storage under cover of this amazing mass of wooden blocks, but to-day the orderly, flat-topped ramparts of it stand out in the open, steadily growing in size, and suggesting nothing else so vividly as a system of sturdy barricades, erected in view of an impending attack by the enemy! Once again let me express my grateful indebtedness to the Russian railway people for their honesty. An invitation has come to me over the telephone to dine at the Embassy to-night. On replying that, owing to the non-delivery of my portmanteau, I have no clothes in which I dare present myself at so august an entertainment, I am bidden to come just as I am. Hardly have I reluctantly consented to do so than a message is sent by the Church dvórnik that he is wishful to see me. I hurry back to my rooms—to find the very trunk I have given up for lost! For the last four days this excellent official has, for all intents and purposes, lived at the Warsaw Station, armed with my registration voucher, and attending the arrival of every train from the south that could possibly be bringing in my luggage. And at

last his patient devotion has met with its reward just in time to save myself from the shame of appearing at the Ambassadorial table costumed 'en touriste,' in a grey suit and brown boots! Never more willingly have I handed over a substantial 'na chai.' The duties of the British Chaplain here in Petrograd are certainly multifarious, and include responsibilities, which, interesting enough in themselves, are not of a sort that is usually associated with the function of the clerical profession. For instance, the Clerk of the Church comes in after lunch to say that I am requested to go down to the Docks to take the oaths at a 'protest' to be declared on board the English steamer 'Neva.' What on earth is a 'protest'? The question may well be asked; for until I had to behave as if I were perfectly familiar with the nature of the thing and of the part incumbent on me to play in relation to it, I had never so much as heard of its existence. As a matter of fact, there is nothing so very mysterious in its character, after all. It is a document, which, in the event of his voyage being unduly protracted by accident or other hindrances, is drawn up by the captain of a vessel before a notary public, and, afterwards, signed by him, the mate, the chief engineer and the leading seaman in the presence of the British Chaplain. It consists of extracts from the ship's log, giving a detailed story of the circumstances held to be accountable for the delay, and, after being formally executed in the manner described, is ultimately passed on to the Consul for communication to the proper quarters. In this particular case, bad weather in the North Sea and an enforced halt outside the mine-field laid in the Baltic beyond Cronstadt are alleged to have prevented the punctual delivery of a cargo of machinery destined for use in one of the Russian munition-factories.

It is a long and uninviting drive down to the Docks, on terribly bumpy roads, and we have considerable difficulty on arriving in locating our particular steamer. But we discover her at last, and at once proceed to the captain's cabin where 'the court' is to be held. The 'old man' himself is unaccountably absent, so the mate takes his place opposite myself at the further end of the table with the other members of the crew, who have presently to sign, standing on either side of him. The 'protest' is handed to me, and I read it aloud—not the easiest of tasks, by the way, with its puzzling abbreviations and array of nautical hieroglyphics. However, in the words of the unmathematical undergraduate set to solve in his examination a certain problem of Euclid, 'I flatter myself that I rendered it highly probable!' At the close of the recital I ask whether those who have been listening are prepared to affirm solemnly the truth of the statements made therein; they all express their readiness so to do, and append their names more or less legibly to the paper—and the séance is over. There is no resisting the mate's invitation to a cup of tea, which we enjoy on the sheltered side of the deck, watching the while the busy scene in front of us—the great ship-yards on the other bank of the river in full swing of clanging, clattering toil; the broad stream alive with traffic, in which the once predominant mercantile element has been almost entirely superseded by the naval. I return home to find the young Englishman who is sharing my rooms at the Church in a state of great excitement. He is an employé at the Crédit Lyonnais, and it has been settled that he and a companion are to start on Saturday for Stockholm to transact there certain business on behalf of his Bank. The trip is likely to be associated with not a little personal

risk, as German cruisers have lately been unusually active off the coast of Finland. But the prospect of an adventure enchants him, and he confides to me that in the event of his capture the firm he represents will not anyhow be seriously the loser. For it is with but a bag-full of letters that he himself has been entrusted, while the safe-guardianship of the large sum of money that is to leave the country with them is committed to his 'accomplice,' who is a Swede, and, therefore a neutral! Well, possibly this protective plan is quite a sound one, but I venture to hope, nevertheless, as well for the sake of this sanguine Swede as for that of the cash in his charge, that the question of the inviolability of a neutral engaged in running an enemy's errand may not need to be brought to the actual test. This evening there is the most magnificent of sunsets. Westward and northward from horizon to zenith the cloudless skies are one vast expanse of lurid, quivering crimson; as if somewhere in the distant Beyond the door of a gigantic furnace has been opened, the fiercely ruddy glow of which—nay, the very heat itself of the raging fires within—is being reflected upwards on to the stooping heavens. As I walk along the quays on my way to the Embassy, the spectacle is almost awe-inspiring; behind me, churches, palaces, houses, all deeply suffused with the angry flush of the 'flame-like, coruscating air;' in front, the great Nevá rolling seawards, a veritable river of blood. Among my fellow guests at to-night's dinner-party are two specially interesting personalities; the British Consul at Warsaw, and Major General Sir John Hanbury Williams, K.C.V.O., C.M.G., who is starting out to-morrow to join the Russian staff at the Polish front.

Friday, August 21st.

A bright, calm morning, with light clouds. After taking the Litany in Church at 10 I drive with the Clerk to one of the Línie in the Vasíli Óstrov to administer the Holy Communion to a bed-ridden invalid. The streets everywhere are full of folk intently gazing heavenwards in expectation of the beginning of the solar eclipse, which is timed for about 11; a phenomenon of which the newspapers have already insisted for the benefit of their less educated, and, therefore, more superstitious readers, that it is in no way to be regarded as a thing of any ominous significance. Most of the crowd seem to be equipped with little squares of smoked glass; but those who, like myself, are not so provided find an excellent substitute for them in the big shop-windows, where the reflected image of the sun can be comfortably contemplated without the risk of a stiff neck or of painful strain to the eyes. The eclipse in question is only, here, at least, a partial one, but, the period of greatest obscuration occurring at mid-day, the effect produced by it both on temperature and light—the genial warmth of a perfect autumn day gradually waning into a chilliness that is aggravated by the uprising of a little bitter breeze; the whole atmosphere mysteriously gloomed into a sickly twilight, whose faint bronze-blue shadows still indicate a certain glimmering of sun—is strikingly, and almost uncannily, curious. About noon celestial conditions have once more become normal ; just in time to illuminate a scene of a very different order of interest. Small companies of German prisoners have already been seen in the streets of Petrograd, but this afternoon witnesses the arrival of a really handsome

batch of these unfortunates. Down the Nevsky they trudge between their mounted guards—a greenish-grey battalion of some hundreds of sullen-faced, hungry-looking men—heading for the grim fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, where temporary quarters await them, until their final place of internment has been decided upon by the authorities. Whether it be that the crowd is so intently watching this dejected march-past that it forgets to cheer, or that, with wondrous good taste, it refrains from further 'kicking' men already 'down,' I cannot say; but the remarkable fact remains to be chronicled that for the whole of the long distance between the (I think) Nicholas Station and the opposite side of the Nevá that procession of captives passes along the thronged roads in practically unbroken silence. No wonder these slouching 'Boches' look unhappy, for terrible tales have, apparently, been told them of the brutality of their Russian foe. So much so, indeed, that of the first contingent to be sent to Petrograd for incarceration not a few at the outset absolutely refused to eat any of the food placed before them for fear of being poisoned thereby. There is one 'side-show' in Petrograd, which every visitor ought most certainly to go and see who has both an eye for the quaint and entertaining, and a soul not above the fun and excitement of driving a hard bargain—the Alexander Market in the Sadóvaya. Baedeker's allusion to the place is of the curtest; it is, he says, 'a sort of rag-fair.' Well, it is that, in one subordinate aspect, but it is a good deal more besides. It is a gigantic jumble-sale, conducted mainly by Jews and Tartars in a great glass-roofed building, whose long and lofty corridors are flanked on either side by rows of dingy shops containing the most miscellaneous collection of odds and ends it

is possible to imagine. These shops vary considerably in character; some being well-stocked with genuine valuables and curiosities and articles 'useful and ornamental' which the experienced and persistent haggler can purchase (as he fondly believes) at extraordinary cheap prices. Others are mere dens of unblushing dirt, and their wares unmitigated rubbish. How on earth the proprietors of these latter ever make, or have the effrontery to try to make, a living out of the sale of such 'stock' as they display is an insoluble problem! It is true that within the building itself second-hand clothes form a staple commodity, but the real 'rag-fair' is held in a big courtyard outside—and providentially so, indeed—as the filthy and verminous condition of many of the garments, furs, more particularly, would soon render life unendurable in less thoroughly ventilated quarters. My principal object in visiting this museum of a market to-day is the purchase of ikons; not the garishly-painted modern variety of the same, with its sacred picture set in a frame-work of tawdry metal relief, but the far older, more interesting type that takes the form of a crucifix or a triptych carved or stamped out in solid brass, and, as often as not, artistically inlaid with coloured enamels. These ikons, for which in other parts of the city quite high prices are demanded, and which the country-folk, I believe, sell to the Jewish dealers for a mere song, can be bought in the Sadóvaya ridiculously cheaply by any one who has the patience (and assumed indifference) requisite for the driving of a hard bargain. At the somewhat forbidding shop I patronize this afternoon two large wicker crates full of these beautifully executed works of art are emptied out for me to take my pick from; and, after a long hour's selecting and chaffering, I come home laden with a big

and weighty bundle of treasures, which have passed into my possession at an infinitesimal fraction of their real market-value. We hear this evening that Brussels was yesterday surrendered to the German General, Count von Arnim, who promptly occupied the city with a very large force of troops.

Saturday, August 22nd.

A fine, bright morning, with cold breeze. There is one excursion I have been meaning to make at the first opportunity—one without the accomplishment of which no visit to these regions can be considered complete—and the hint of to-day's delightful weather is too strong to allow of further delay. I refer to the trip to Cronstadt. The majority of Englishmen, I suppose, are not unacquainted with the topographical position and general historical associations of this, the greatest and most famous of all Russian naval stations. Captured in 1703 by Peter the Great from the Swedes, ever since the Crimean War the island's tremendously powerful defences as guardian of the sea-approaches to Petrograd have been a household word, and, although many of the subsidiary forts that, dotted about in the Nevá Bay, once kept the fleets of our grandfathers at a respectful distance have now been disarmed and converted into prisons, yet nowadays the great central stronghold itself, with its arsenals and docks, its narrow mine-sown channels, its mighty batteries and searchlights and ceaselessly patrolled waters, is an even more impregnable protection to the heart of the Tsar's empire than it was at its best in the days when England measured her strength against that of Nicholas I. As a matter of fact, it is entirely inaccurate to speak of

'the island' of Cronstadt. The name properly applies only to the town and fortifications, which cover a large part of Kotlin—an island somewhat the same size and shape as Sark—with this difference, however, between the two; that, whereas Sark is a conspicuous object at many miles distance by reason of its lofty, precipitous cliffs, Kotlin is little better than a superior type of sand-bank, scarcely rising anywhere much above the water-level, and, save for the low, grey hump that marks the dome of the Naval Cathedral, quite invisible from the Capital some 21 miles away to the E.S.E. For more reasons than one the steamer-journey to Cronstadt is full of interest. In the first place, as the start is made so far up the Nevá as the Nicholas Bridge, the run down the river gives one the best possible view of the docks and ship-building yards situate at its mouth. The docks to-day, alas! thanks to the war, are mere shadows of their former selves, containing but a few forlorn-looking steamers that, bereft of their crews, are laid up until such time as the northern seas shall be once again free from the fear of the enemy and his devices. One boat, however, is lying alongside the deserted quays that immediately attracts attention; she is the famous ice-breaker 'Ermák,' whose more accustomed haunts are the frozen waters of the higher latitudes. What she is doing, or destined to do, so far south at the beginning of autumn is only known to the authorities, who, doubtless, have assigned important local work to her during the coming winter months. By way of contrast, and as one would naturally expect, naval construction is going on apace in the huge yards lower down, crowds of artificers being busily engaged upon three or four battleships of the 'Dreadnought' type; one, the 'Sevastópol,' a formidable-looking monster,

receiving her finishing touches. The Bay of the Nevá, which one now enters, has two remarkable characteristics; its waters, owing to the vast volume poured into it by the river that gives it its name, are fresh, not salt: and so shallow is it in depth that none but vessels of the lightest draught can travel across it, even along the deeper channels that are denoted by rows of dilapidated stakes. In the case of the larger steamers that frequent the Port, traffic to and from the Baltic is carried on entirely by means of the Morskóe Canal, an artificial passage-way, seventeen miles long and twenty-six feet deep, connecting the roads of Cronstadt with the Bolshaya Nevá ('Great Nevá') at its embouchure. My fellow-passengers to-day are but few, and mainly consist of jovial sailor-men returning from leave to their duties on the island; but there is a leaven of civilians as well, among them the English Vice-Consul, a very old resident on the island, who is horrified at the idea of my having brought a pair of field-glasses on such an excursion, recommending me both to hand them over to the keeping of the head steward until I am once more safely on board, and, on landing, to be very careful indeed as a foreigner into what parts of the town and its outskirts I find my way. Naturally, the authorities are not just now over-anxious to encourage visitors, and while no objection will be raised to my seeing all that there may be to interest me in what is known as the Commercial Quarter, it will be a distinctly 'unhealthy' experience for me, should I, however inadvertently, penetrate into regions where there is 'No admittance except on business!' I must confess to a certain amount of disappointment with the aspect of Cronstadt as approached, so to speak, from the rear. On landing at the long, low, wooden jetty

after one and a half hours 'at sea,' there is nothing whatever to suggest one's arrival at a strongly fortified place. True it is that passports are scrutinized with a carefulness that tells its own tale, but, so far as appearances go, one might have come ashore at some little, peaceful lake-side town, whose very ordinary houses have never known what it is to have their windows rattled by the booming of a heavy gun. The explanation is, of course, simple enough. It is on the N. and W. alone that Cronstadt is required to command the waters of the Gulf of Finland, and on those sides it is that all the force of its powerful armament is concentrated. The insignificant 'back-door' that opens towards Petrograd may well be left undefended, as, except in the remote contingency of an attack from the land-ward quarter, no danger can possibly threaten its security. The same feature of depressing commonplace characterizes most of the town itself, there being only one street, the Nikoláyevski Prospékt, that has the slightest claim to distinction, architectural or otherwise. This, the main business-thoroughfare of the island, divides the Commercial Quarter through its whole length; perhaps the chief object of interest to be found in it being the Cathedral of St. Andrew, made famous by its association with the career of the celebrated 'Father John of Cronstadt.' The fact is that the mercantile importance of Cronstadt is entirely a thing of the past. An 'Illustrated London News' of the date of the Crimean War describes the place as 'the harbour of St. Petersburg,' and adds this further information; 'All vessels proceeding to that port are searched here, and their cargoes sealed, and such as are too large for the shallow waters of the Upper Nevá unload their freights and transport them in smaller craft. Vessels built at

Petersburg are placed on a 'camel,' or kind of raft, by which their draught of water is lessened one-half, and then floated down the Nevá, and over its bar, on which there is often only seven feet of water.' For the last thirty years, ever since the construction of the Sea Canal, that indispensable relation of Cronstadt with the capital has ceased to exist, and, apart from such traffic as is necessitated by the requirements of the garrison and naval authorities, the once-crowded Commercial Harbour is nowadays practically destitute of shipping. There is one building, however, in the town that amply atones for shortcomings elsewhere, and that is the brand-new Naval Cathedral—quite the finest edifice of the kind I have seen in Russia, both for dignified grandeur of proportion and lavish magnificence of internal decoration. It constitutes a sort of 'Westminster Abbey' for the Navy, the walls being covered with memorials erected in honour of the heroes who, whether at home or abroad, have laid down their lives in the service of their country. Most appropriately, in the grounds outside, stands a striking monument to the distinguished Admiral Makárov, who, it will be remembered, perished in his flag-ship, the 'Petropávlovsk,' during the Russo-Japanese War, on April 13th, 1904. Beyond this splendid sanctuary lie, apparently, the frontiers of the 'forbidden ground,' for a suggestion to my 'izvóshtchik' that he should proceed further towards the 'Voénnaya Gávan,' or Naval Harbour, in the hopes that if but a glimpse only of its wonders and its mysteries may be permitted to me, is greeted by an emphatic shake of the head and a prompt whipping round of his steed in the opposite direction. So the only thing to do is to pocket one's curiosity, and to submit to be driven back through a series of wholly

uninteresting streets on the western side of the Commercial Quarter down to the ramshackle pier, whence the steamer soon afterwards starts on her return-journey. What this trip between Cronstadt and the mainland must be like in really bad weather is faintly hinted at this afternoon. For the N.W. breeze has considerably freshened since morning, bringing in a roll from the Baltic to which the shallow waters of the Nevá Bay prove themselves unpleasantly responsive. It is as well, perhaps, one cannot help thinking, that the whole of this part of the Finnish Gulf is frozen solid throughout the winter months! This evening I am privileged to spend some delightfully interesting hours at the palatial home of the Dutch Consul in the English Prospékt. He has not only surrendered the greater part of his superbly appointed residence to serve as a hospital containing over seventy beds for the use of Russian sick and wounded, but also at his own expense has equipped it with every conceivable medical and surgical requirement, including an operating theatre. That subjects of belligerent powers, whether at home or abroad in allied countries, should show a large-hearted generosity in providing for the physical needs of the gallant men who have suffered in fighting their battles for them is natural and right enough; but for a neutral to evince so practical a sympathy towards the broken warriors of a people with whose quarrel his nationality at least does not identify him must, surely, be as rare as it is praiseworthy.

PART III

During the War; Home-coming

(September 3—September 9)

Synopsis of Events, August 25—September 2.

August 25.—Largely attended meeting of the British Colony held at the Embassy with a view to organising definite aid for Russian sick and wounded. Resolved unanimously that a Convalescent Home be inaugurated, entitled 'The British Home for Russian Wounded Soldiers.' A very successful collection made in the streets on behalf of families of men at the front.

August 26.—Rumours that the Bergen-Newcastle route to England has been declared unsafe owing to floating mines.

August 27.—Embassy despatches special courier with letters to England. Great Intercession Service at the English Church at 8.30 p.m. 'on behalf of His Majesty's naval and military forces now engaged in war.'

August 30.—I arrange with the Ambassador to return to England on September 3 as King's Messenger; the despatches to be ready by the evening of September 2.

September 1.—News that Russia has experienced a very severe defeat on the Polish frontier, involving the loss of three Generals and heavy casualties among the rank and file. I book at the Nordisk Reise Bureau for England via Raumo, Stockholm, Christiana and Newcastle, at the cost of 153 roubles, 20 k.

September 2.—Great excitement in Petrograd over reported Austrian rout. Despatches arrive for me from the Embassy at 11.30 p.m.

PART III

DURING THE WAR; HOME-COMING

Thursday, September 3rd.

A fine cool morning, with heavy clouds and a fresh N.E. breeze. My train is not due to start until 9, but, as I have been warned that the rush for places in it will be tremendous, I leave my lodgings on the long drive to the Finland Station at 7, so as to make sure of a seat. On reaching the terminus, I find it even at that early hour full of people; most of them, intending travellers, of whom not a few, English, Americans and French, are bound on the same adventure as myself; others, folk, whose kindly office of speeding their friends on their departure is in a good many cases not entirely unassociated with a practical eye to business. As things are at present, the chance of a letter arriving, say, in England through the ordinary channel of the mail is almost microscopic. The only real hope for it is that it should be entrusted to the charge of someone who himself is making the journey in question, and who will undertake its posting on reaching his destination. Missives of all sorts have been inundating my rooms during the last two days, and the total in my bag swells considerably while I am waiting about on the platform. The train backs into the station at 8.15, and is instantly stormed by a multitude that soon fills it from end to end. At 9.5 we are off, a run of twenty miles bringing

us at 10.10 to Bielo-Óstrov, the border-town of Finland proper, where, during a wait of nearly two hours, our passports are taken from us and returned after examination. Finland, although constituting a Grand Duchy of the Tsar's Empire, nevertheless possesses rights of self-government, having, among other features of that privilege, its own system of customs and frontier regulations: hence this rather peculiar proceeding on what to all intents and purposes is Russian territory. Our tedious delay here, however, seems to be mainly caused by the endless succession of troop-trains, all going in the opposite direction, and, as usual, crammed to the last inch of standing-room with singing, shouting, cap-waving soldiers, glad, one can well understand, to be relieved of the monotony of awaiting the enemy in a district that, apparently, it is no part of his plan to invade, and rejoicing to feel that they are being hurried as fast as steam can take them to play their part in 'the real thing' with their comrades further east and south. The country through which we are just now passing has very little to recommend it, picturesquely considered. True, in the vicinity of the villages there are signs of cultivation and small pasture-lands; but grey rocks constantly cropping out bear unmistakable witness to the shallowness of the soil. Otherwise, for the most part, heathery moorland and dismal swamp predominate, with, here and there, belts and stretches of stunted, wind-bowed pine and birch. The method of construction of the fences which separate the fields is as curious as it is ingenious, and not easy, therefore, to describe. But, roughly speaking, it is this. At intervals of every ten feet or so two posts are planted side by side at something like the angle of 45°, and linked together by spaced-out rungs. On these rungs are laid slant-wise

wooden battens, increasing in length as they ascend the 'ladder,' so that, while those at the bottom reach across to the next 'point d'appui' with but little to spare, their successors project through and beyond it with a progressively greater overlap, thus supplying in a raggedly effective way the upper half of the neighbouring division. The manufacture of haycocks is also carried out in this part of the world in a distinctly original way. A tall stake is driven into the ground, which, fitted promiscuously with nine or ten short arms, suggests nothing more exactly than a gigantic edition of the perch-holder in a parrot's cage. On to this quaintly-devised apparatus the hay is tossed; that portion of it which remains lodged on the arms forming the nucleus round which is gradually built up a compact little stack not dissimilar in shape to an overgrown beehive. At 2.30 we reach the historic old fortified town of Viborg—a delightfully picturesque place, even as seen from the railway; on the left, a busy harbour, guarded by an ancient castle of a somewhat ecclesiastical type of architecture; on the right, a broad, winding estuary, dotted with green-clad islands, which forms the seaward end of the canal that connects it with Lake Siama some forty miles to the north. One of my fellow-pssengers is a young Finnish doctor, in charge of a Red Cross Hospital at Helsingfors, who speaks English quite fluently. He tells me that here, in common with every other town along this littoral, no illumination whatever is allowed in the streets at night—not so much as a glimmer even on the trams; that not only have all the lighthouses and beacons on the coast been extinguished from the first day of the outbreak of hostilities, but also that the authorities have summarily removed the occupants of every dátcha for some way inland,

partly for fear of the display of lights that might be visible out at sea, partly, too, as a precaution against any sudden raid that might be carried out by the enemy under cover of darkness. Viborg is possessed of a good railway buffet, where, in spite of the mass of soldiery that blocks both it and the platform, the materials of a welcome lunch are procured. Henceforward the journey is continued with little to interest either in scenery or incident, unless one excepts a mild excitement caused some two hours later by extraordinary, not to say, alarming, sounds proceeding from one of the wheels beneath our carriage. The matter is reported to the officials at the next halt, who, after due inspection, vouchsafe the information that 'something has gone wrong' in the bearing. But 'nitchevó!' the wheel must take its chance; it will 'probably' be all right! And luckily their surmises prove correct! At 7 p.m. we arrive at Kouvola, the junction for Helsingfors, and most of us wisely employ the half hour's wait in further replenishment of the inner man. A tall, black-bearded Finn gets into our compartment here, who, spying my clerical collar, presently leans across and asks me in my own mother tongue whether I should 'care to see the "Church Times" for August 21st!' Naturally I reply 'Yes,'—but what conceivably can he be doing in this out-of-the-way part of the world with an English Church newspaper? I learn in the course of a long and interesting conversation that my new acquaintance has for some years been doing religious work among Russian sailors in the London Docks; that, having returned home at the outset of the war, he is still engaged in evangelical labours in the seaports of his own land; and that, although himself a staunch member of the Greek Church, his sympathies

are so closely linked with our own branch of the Catholic Faith that he subscribes regularly for one of its representative organs. His attitude in that respect is by no means an exceptional one among his fellow-countrymen. 'Nowhere,' remarks Bishop Bury, in his charming book, 'Russian Life To-day,' 'is the position of our (English) Church more fully, sympathetically or affectionately recognized than in Russia,' and he goes on to quote the striking statement of a writer in the 'Contemporary Review' to the effect that the one thing about England common to the minds of all classes of the population is the idea of a close similarity existing between the Churches of the two countries and the religion they represent. How can I trust my pen to write restrainedly of our arrival and experiences at Riihimaki, our destined stopping-place for the night, at which wretched spot we are turned out of the train at 1 a.m., hungry and dog-tired, in drenching rain, and in a darkness only here and there made dimly visible by stray gleams that filter through the curtained windows of the buffet and waiting room? To begin with, that portion of the platform opposite which we come to a halt has been, doubtless for some good reason or other, cut back a yard or so from its outer edge; with the result that a white-haired old lady, who is the first to leave our carriage, steps out, bundles and all, on to nothingness, and falls with a splashing thud into the slimy mud by the side of the permanent way! Poor body, she is soon dragged out of the mess, luckily, more frightened than hurt; but the accident must have been a rude shock to aged nerves and bones, particularly as she has been followed in her downfall by another passenger, who lies sprawling across her prostrate form. The next crushing blow is more equally divided. It takes

the form of information brought round by Russian-speaking co-voyageurs that no accommodation of any kind is procurable in the town—or, rather, village—for sleeping purposes, as every available bed has been commandeered by the military; that no one on any pretext whatever is allowed to enter the buffet, which, together with its contents, is until to-morrow morning strictly reserved for the convenience of officers; and that we must all do the best we can for ourselves for the night in the 'pasazhírof,' or half, waiting-room, half, booking-hall, which by the time these tidings reach us is already uncomfortably full! (We hear afterwards, much to our chagrin, that certain of those who should have shared this fate with us have, no doubt by a judicious application of 'palm oil' in the right quarters, reposed peacefully in the train which ought to have lain empty in a distant siding). Words fail me to describe the immeasurable misery of this unforgettable night. In an apartment about fifty feet square, lit(?) with two feeble oil lamps, is immured a miscellaneous mob of people, all famished and all wet. The first comers have secured possession of the few benches and tables, on which they are lying huddled up in an endeavour to slumber amid a babel of chatter and the wailing of disconsolate infants. Others, like myself, with nodding heads are perched uneasily upon the piles of rugs, handbags and boxes that are stacked along the dirty, streaming walls; others, again, who can find no better resting place, have, perforce, when tired of standing, to sit or recline on the bare boards of the floor, intermingled with a squad of soldiers, who are waiting their turn to go on guard, and who are lying promiscuously about in everybody's way, fast asleep in the most extraordinary attitudes of weary 'abandon.'

Friday, September 4th.

Dawn at last, grey and chilly—a wretched thing of weeping skies and moaning, blustery wind—but, as marking the end of what has been a 'nuit blanche' for most of us, passing welcome for all its dolefulness of circumstance. An attempt at 6.30 to invade the buffet for purposes of sorely needed refreshment meets with the same repulse as that of last night, but two hours later the guardian soldiers have disappeared from its doors, and a ravenous crowd is making short work of deliciously hot coffee and of what military appetites have left behind in the way of comestibles more solid and sustaining. So inspiriting an effect has a good breakfast on certain members of our company that, on returning to the scene of their late tiresome vigil, they break out into melody both loud and long. These performers, some twenty in number, are the crew of an English tramp-steamer, who, their ship being laid up at Petrograd, are making their way home. Being for the most part Yorkshiremen, their impromptu concert has a musical quality about it which seems to be a real surprise to the audience of mixed nationalities that soon gathers thickly around the singers; the chief interest, perhaps, being focussed on the accompanyist, a stoker, who provides most tuneful—not to say, flowery—renderings of familiar English, Scotch and Irish airs on a fiddle that he has cleverly constructed out of a cigar box. At 10.30 the arrival of the anxiously awaited train from Helsingfors provokes the usual furious mêlée for places, a scramble which lands me eventually in a compartment mainly occupied by a couple of German ladies and a bevy of children, none of whom seem to have the slightest shyness in betraying either their

origin or their destination—which is Hamburg. It, surely, is almost 'asking for trouble' to flaunt 'enemy' newspapers and 'enemy' gutturals, as the two elders are doing, in the very face of their fellow-passengers, but no one appears to take the least notice of the risky impertinence; at any rate, whatever offence is thereby caused is concealed behind the silent unconcern which is the most effective weapon of contempt. Of the scenery which for the next four hours we pass through I can give but the scantiest of descriptions—thick mists of heavy, driving rain effectually screening the landscape from view. But from the rare glimpses vouchsafed it would appear flat and uninteresting in the extreme, except where the line runs between Akkas and Lampäälä. Here, the monotony of level pasture-lands and well cultivated fields is refreshingly broken by a greater wildness of country—low, tumbling hills, where fir and birch grow in profusion among the grey, jutting rocks and irregular valleys, in which lie some of the picturesque and countless tarns and lakes for which this particular district of Finland is famous. Our first halt of any duration is at the busy manufacturing town of Tammerfors, which we reach at 2.30, and exchange our northward-bound train for one going west. This place is the Finnish Manchester, delightfully situated on an isthmus between two big lakes, the rapid stream connecting which divides the town into two portions, and provides the power required for its factories. Leaving this at 3.30, another four hours of uneventful travel, through, at least in its earlier stages, the same characteristic type of scenery, bring us at last in the darkness of a windy, drizzling night to Raumo, the quaint old port from which we are presently to cross the Gulf of Bothnia to Stockholm. Two rival steamers

are being sufficiently venturesome in this way to run the gauntlet of the German cruisers, which are believed to be haunting the vicinity of the Åland Islands with a view to a capture, and at the town station our train is boarded by touts representative of both them, who, in terms entirely unintelligible to most of us, endeavour to secure our patronage for their respective vessels. The one steamer, it turns out, is a fine, excellently appointed boat of some 1500 tons, the 'Oihonna'; the other, a poor, slow, ancient thing of but half the size. Happy those, we are later on to discover, who, as myself, have by pure accident engaged the most comfortable of berths aboard the former! Meanwhile, during the course of these momentous 'pourparlers,' our train has crawled slowly down to the harbour, and has drawn up alongside the miserable wooden sheds that serve as Custom House. A good many of us have been anticipating the ordeal now immediately impending with considerable searchings of heart. An edict has, apparently, recently gone forth that no unauthorized written matter is to leave the country, and, consequently, a close search is made for documents and letters, whose escape of the scrutiny of the censor may be the means of disseminating information useful to the enemy. Two friendly compatriots, who meet me at the entrance of the 'tamózhnya,' and who have already been through 'the mill' themselves, warn me of the trouble in store, should my luggage be found to contain any of these forbidden literary wares, and most kindly undertake to relieve me of the responsibility of the epistles entrusted to me for postage in England as well as of the diary on which the present little narrative is based. As to the despatches, they must be left to their own fate; it is no use trying to smuggle past inquisitive eyes a bundle

so suggestively bulky. It so happens that, tied up as they are in the most innocent-looking wrapping of shirts and underwear, they pass muster without a single suspicion aroused. Not, so I suppose, that any fuss would have been made about these latter in the case of their detection. For my King's Messenger's passport is acknowledged on presentation with a salute, and returned to me after inspection with a grave and respectful bow. My new acquaintances are both interesting men, with exciting stories to tell of their recent adventures. One is the war correspondent of a big London daily, who is returning from the fighting on the Russian frontier with distinctly pessimistic impressions of our ally's progress and prospects in that region of the campaign. The other is the young English ex-manager of a large estate in Eastern Prussia, who has gone through all sorts of thrilling and unpleasant experiences in escaping from the clutches of the enemy, and is now getting back to the home-country to enlist, in a practically penniless condition. It is nearly 10 p.m. before all formalities are over and we are free to go on board our steamer, which lies, a blaze of cosy, welcoming light, exactly opposite the Custom House exit. I never wish to travel on a better, more handsomely equipped vessel. Spotlessly clean both on deck and below it, her large, airy, well-furnished saloons and luxurious cabins seem rather those of a private yacht than of an ordinary passenger liner. The most tempting of suppers 'à la suédoise' awaits attention immediately we have settled in, and it is well after midnight before we retire to get some sleeping done ere the noises of departure shall arouse us at 4 a.m. The weather has by now vastly improved; a brilliant moon riding overhead in a sky which, save for a few ragged, flying patches, a strong

N.W. breeze has swept completely clear of the rain-clouds that have shrouded it all day.

Saturday, September 4th.

There is one discovery we have all made before daybreak this morning; that travel on a ship without cargo in a heavy beam sea is emphatically 'an acquired taste!' The capers cut by our good 'Oihonna' amid the great dark-blue, foam-capped rollers that go swinging under her buoyant hull—her soaring pitches, her staggering lurches, her dizzy downward swoops—are enough to try the endurance of far more seasoned mariners than, apparently, are most of the few passengers on board. So I am not surprised to find the deck practically deserted when I clutch and stumble my way up thither at 7 a.m. to enjoy the magnificent, sun-lit sea-scape that—a flashing, tumultuous welter of white and indigo—stretches in a wild sublimity of turmoil to a hard-rimmed horizon all round. A sharp look-out is being kept both at the bows and on either side of the bridge for any signs of the enemy warships that are known to be lurking in this part of the Gulf, and not a vessel shows itself in the furthest distance but a battery of peering glasses is focussed upon it in case the tell-tale vision of a cruiser's fighting-tops may disclose the need of an instant change of course. There are but two of us sufficiently heroic to brave the thought of breakfast at 8 in the reeling saloon; a meal, which, in my case, has a somewhat unpropitious start. For the unfortunate waitress who is bringing me a tray-full of crockery and eatables is thrown off her balance by a sudden plunge of the ship just before she reaches my table, and is shot, burden and all, with a resounding crash into the opposite corner. At 12.45 we pass the

first outlier of the scattered mass of rocky islands that form the Åland group, in whose sheltered lee the sea soon quiets down into an almost unruffled smoothness. These islands, which have belonged to Russia since 1809, are several hundreds in number, the 80-90 which are inhabited supporting a population of about 1600, mainly fishermen and seal hunters, two-thirds of this total residing on the largest of the cluster, the well-wooded and fruitful Fasta Åland, which is some eighteen miles long by fourteen broad. The sorrows of sea-sickness are soon forgotten in these calm, land-locked lagoons, and it is a cheery, if white-gilled, company that assembles for lunch in the saloon at 1. But, even while we are engaged upon our post-prandial coffee, peremptory orders come round that all blinds on the ship are to be drawn down, and that we are to stay in our places while the steamer is being piloted by a torpedo boat through a mine-field that extends here across the entrance into Swedish waters. Most probably no danger whatever exists, but it is an uncanny sensation, none the less, to have to sit still for a quarter of an hour in semi-darkness, and feel the ship zig-zagging at dead slow speed through the explosive area, her barely perceptible onward crawl being at intervals diversified by a furious, jarring reversal of the engines as she twists round the sharp angles of the narrow channel of safety. We are treated to a second edition of this novel experience at 4.30, this time being ignominiously herded in the main cabin below stairs. At any time, indeed, this five hours' trip through scenery of such varied natural charm as that which continues unbrokenly from the open sea to the Swedish capital must be one of appealing interest. But this afternoon, with scarcely a breath of wind to ripple the surface of

the tideway, and a gorgeousness of sunshine to flood the prospect with the warmth and gaiety of colour, and to paint the burnished water with the most wonderful reflections, the journey provides a constantly changing panorama of extraordinary delightfulness and beauty; and it seems to some of us that the end of the brief voyage is reached all too soon, when the fiord (if it may so be called) swings sharply round to the left after passing a frowning, grass-clad fort on the right, and reveals in the distance the shipping lying alongside the quays at Stockholm, with, prominent among the buildings that cluster picturesquely around it, the soaring spire of the Riddarholms Kyrka, the historic burial-place of the Swedish kings. If the investigations of the Customs officials at Raumo were rigorously thorough, the scrutiny to which we have to submit our luggage at the hands of the Swedish authorities is even stricter and more searching yet. It is a wearisome business waiting one's turn in a dark and draughty shed, while in the case of every passenger not only are the contents of trunk and handbag minutely overhauled, and passports carefully examined, but signatures also demanded to all sorts of personal declarations as to starting-point, purpose and destination of journey, proposed length of sojourn in Sweden, &c., &c. It may be interesting, perhaps, to record here the terms of the printed document handed to each one of us as we leave the ship: —

'According to Royal Order, every foreign citizen staying in, arriving at or starting from Stockholm has to give the Police Authorities (the nearest Police Station) immediate report of his (her) name, natal day and year, birth-place, occupation, domicile and nationality.

'Every foreign citizen arriving at or starting from Stockholm has to give the Police Authorities immediate

report of his (her) address. If he (she) changes lodgings, the new address is to be reported to the same Authorities.

'Every foreign citizen reporting his (her) intention to leave Stockholm has to give not only his (her) last address, but also the name of the place to which he (she) intends to go.

'Omission to follow these prescriptions may cause arrest and expulsion.

'THE CHIEF OF POLICE.'

'Stockholm, August, 1914.'

'SUPPLEMENT.'

'According to Royal Order, every foreign citizen arriving at Stockholm also has to give the Police Authorities report of his (her) last whereabouts inside or outside Sweden.

'Every foreign citizen wishing to enter or leave Sweden has to legitimate himself (herself) before the Police Authorities.

'THE CHIEF OF POLICE.'

'Stockholm, August, 1914.'

I ask the official who brings me the various papers to sign what may be the reason of this particularity of inquisition. Is it inspired by pro-Germanism: by anti-Englishism—or what? He assures me that Sweden as a whole has no quarrel with my country whatever, and that, on broad lines, considerable sympathy is felt for the cause the Allies have espoused; so much so that no inducement could weigh sufficiently with his compatriots to throw in their lot with our enemies. He adds that it is against the Russians that his people are—and not without reason—on their guard; that, although certainly with less anxiety now than at the beginning of the war, Sweden is feeling compelled to take special precautions against the possibility of aggression on the part of her powerful neighbour on the east, the flooding

of Finland with troops in August having given point to her suspicions and fears; and that, anyhow, even supposing immediate cause for disquietude in this regard to have been removed, the land is inundated with Russian spies, to trace and identify whom every possible measure is being adopted.

It is but a short run in a taxi from the Quay to the delightfully situated Grand Hotel—improved almost out of recognition since my last visit there in 1900—in which the only set-off to a complete sense of restful satisfaction with palatial surroundings and the most comfortable of rooms is the dismaying discovery that a large bottle of Russian Nazan water has been broken in my kit-bag, soaking the contents thereof through and through, and immersing the few photographic films I have been able to expose in a sticky, turbid purée of mingled chocolate and tobacco! It is a perfect evening, soft and starry and calm, and an excellent dinner, served in a sort of big winter-garden to the music of waters coolly plashing down a lofty rockery, has, so we four fellow-travellers who take the meal together agree, much to commend it as a fit and proper ending to, if not a particularly eventful, at any rate, an altogether interesting day.

Sunday, September 5th.

A dull, grey day in its earlier hours, breaking later on into glorious summer weather. What a truly wonderful place this Stockholm is! However you may care to consider it—whether from the merely architectural standpoint, or in regard to those natural features of unique distinction and charm that give to the city so strikingly picturesque a setting—there belongs to it an arresting quality of fascination for the eye that, so far as

I know, is exercised by no other capital in Europe. To call it, as some have, the 'Venice of the North' is, from one point of view, perhaps, a fair enough simile. For here is 'water, water everywhere,' dividing up the city into its various islands by broad, swift streams alive with the ceaseless traffic of steamers, great and small. But, in another aspect, such a likeness is a libel. For what could be further from any semblance to Venice, with its narrow, gloomy, palace-shadowed canals and its traditional spirit of 'dolce far niente' than Stockholm, the bright, the busy, the ever gay and yet the ever strenuous, whose situation amid her vast maze of beautiful fiords and rocky, fir-clad islets is, indeed, a very miracle of Nature in her most romantic and soul-satisfying guise? There is more than one way of seeing the distinctive glories of this grand and winsome place. If one wishes to get a good idea of the general configuration and characteristics of the city in the briefest possible time, the magnificent 'coup d' oeil' from the high ground of the Mosebacke, which is reached by an immense steam-lift in the South quarter, or Södermalm, provides a view which is as comprehensive as it is captivating. But Stockholm—to make the word inclusive of its far-reaching outskirts as well—can only be properly seen by water. Not only, by means of one or other of the many steamers that start, in the majority of cases, from the Quay in front of the Grand Hotel, is practically every part of the city itself worth visiting easily accessible, but also are there considerably longer excursions to be made in this way into regions far beyond the capital's vicinity. If no one can pretend to have even a nodding acquaintance with Stockholm who has not made the tiny 'voyage' from the Skeppsholm to the island park at Djurgård, and dined with the festive

crowd at the famous Hasselbacken restaurant, so may none presume to think that he knows anything at all of its extraordinary interesting and picturesque environment, who has not journeyed down lovely Lake Mälaren, say, as far as Mariefred with its ancient castle of Gripsholm, or who has not taken a trip along the Saltsjö Baltic-wards to the rocky, fortified island of Vaxholm. It seems to me, as I sit before breakfast this morning looking out of my bedroom window, that the Swedes have decidedly Russian views as to the right way of spending their Sunday. Just below, moored alongside the Blasieholms-Hamnen, are some dozen or so steamers, each placarded with its particular destination, and rapidly filling up with a mixed multitude that, ere the hour for departure comes, is to test the vessel's accommodation to the utmost. Wonderfully happy-looking are the throngs of holiday-makers that I encounter presently in my morning stroll along the quays. Everywhere are sunny faces and high spirits and sprightly chatter. Whether it be a normal Scandinavian characteristic, or whether the impression be produced in my mind mainly by the contrasted sadness that seems to sit like a cloud on the countenance of so many Russians—I cannot say. But the fact remains that nowhere, except, perhaps, at Odessa, have I seen blithe-heartedness more universally and transparently visible than in the expression and mien of the men and women I have met in Stockholm and Christiania. As I pass over the fine, seven-arched Norrbro that connects the main part of the city with the Staden, the island on which is built the imposing Royal Palace, a blaring military band comes swinging along, with a wake of some 200 folk, old and young together, marching in step with the lilting music in quite un-selfconscious delight, not in the least ashamed to

show that the rollicking strains have taken them captive, and that their habit is to accept the chance of enjoying themselves just where and as it comes. We hear incidentally at lunch that Sweden is proposing to de-mobilize her army in the near future, and that the German forces are making irresistible progress on both East and West. The afternoon divides itself uneventfully between sight-seeing and the taking of a little not un-needed rest. Slumber lately has been 'honoured' distinctly 'more in the breach than in the observance,' and there is the prospect of another night to be spent in the 'snälltag' (express), which leaves for Christiania at 9.7 p.m. But one need not, after all, have worried oneself overmuch on the score of a possibly sleepless journey; for, for the modest consideration of 5 kr 35 ö—about 6s.—in addition to the 2nd class fare, the most comfortable of beds is obtainable in a 'sovevogn' that runs all the way through to the Norwegian terminus. A somewhat hurried early dinner; a short taxi drive to the Central Station; a crowd of fellow-passengers, and every seat in the train engaged—and we are off almost punctually to the minute on our long thirteen hours' trip.

Monday, September 6th.

What a difference there is between these Swedish railways and those of Russia! The contrast is not so much, perhaps, in general quality of rolling-stock; for some of the Russian carriages, particularly those of the 1st class, are admirably built and equipped in every way. It is rather in smoothness and speed of running that the refreshing change is realized. Not that in either of these respects they can hold the proverbial candle to even the less popular of our English lines, but, after the exasperating, jolting dawdle of 15-20 miles an hour that

prevails throughout the land of the Slav, it is indeed delightful to watch the telegraph posts flash by in swift succession, and to feel that sleek, swinging glide of the carriage in which one is travelling which tells of metals well and truly laid. A Norwegian Customs' official pokes his head into my compartment at 7.45 this morning, and addresses to me a string of totally unintelligible questions, which, presumably, refer to the contents of my baggage. He is easily satisfied, however, with a 'Nej' and a shake of the head. It rather surprises me, by the way, to find that this man neither speaks nor understands a single word of English, which is taught, I believe, in all the schools of Scandinavia. In the big towns, for instance, especially, perhaps, in Norway, one can nearly always enquire one's way of a passer-by, or ask for what one wants in a shop, with a fair certainty, not only of one's meaning being grasped, but of a reasonably well expressed response being given in one's own mother-tongue. Possibly, however, it is expecting rather too much of the country districts to hope to find in them a similar standard of linguistic proficiency. There is no need of this visit of the frontier-guard to notify the fact of having crossed the border from Sweden into Norway. The altered type of scenery is of itself sufficiently suggestive, and, after the comparative flatness and featurelessness of the former territory, it is a welcome change to find the line running through landscape of a far bolder order of picturesqueness, pleasantly diversified by lofty mountain ranges and broad, deep-cut, grassy valleys. On a day like this—brilliantly fine, with not a breath of wind to disturb the wonderful reflections mirrored on tarn and stream—one is seeing the striking beauties of this part of the country's magnificent natural charms under the best possible

conditions. We reach the fine terminus of Christiania at 10.20, and, handing over our goods and chattels to the safe-keeping of the cloakroom, most of us English folk make off with what speed we can in search of breakfast at the Grand Hotel, which is situated in the Karl Johans Gade, the most important street in the city. Our train on to Bergen is not due to leave until 10.40 p.m., but the prospect of a 12 hours' sojourn in this cheery, clean and attractive capital is hailed by the party with delighted anticipation. The question may be asked here—and not unnaturally—why this prolongation of the land journey so much further as to Bergen (a matter of twelve more hours of railway travel), considering that access to England from Christiania is quite easy by more than one line of excellent steamers? The answer to that is very simple. As the war has progressed, so have the dangers of the North Sea increased by reason of floating mines. At first the infested area was practically limited to the waters that lay immediately between the east coast of England—say, from Hull on the north to Dover on the south—and the western shores of Germany and Belgium. The sea-passage, therefore, from a port even so far south as Esbjerg, in Denmark, was reasonably safe from this kind of peril. But, as time went on, and mines were scattered broadcast over a wider tract, the danger-zone gradually extended northwards, with the result that passenger traffic from the Continent had to shift its points of departure higher up the western seaboard. It was not long before Esbjerg was out of commission, and Christiania became its successor, but for a short time only. True, boats are still running from here to Hull, professedly for cargo-carrying purposes only, but that their trips are attended with a very considerable amount of risk is, curiously enough, illustrated for us

on this very day by the news that one of the Wilson liners was blown up yesterday off the Yorkshire coast. Between Christiania and Bergen there is not much difference in point of latitude, but vessels sailing from the latter port have not to make the hazardous southing round Cape Lindesnaes; they can strike out at once on a W.N.W. course for the Shetland Islands, and thence drop down to Newcastle close inshore in comparative security. Ever since the beginning of the war a Norwegian Company, the 'Bergenske Dampskibsselskab,' has been maintaining a regular service by this route, and hitherto without contretemps; a fact quite sufficient of itself to account for the practically unchallenged monopoly enjoyed by its boats as a means of transit to and from the N.W. regions of the Continent. Christiania has much to recommend it from the sight-seeing point of view, but detailed allusion to the many interesting features with which the city abounds—such as the Royal Palace, finely situated on an eminence in its beautifully wooded park; the Storthings-Bygning, or Parliament House; the handsome buildings of the University; and the Stor-Torv ('great market'), dominated by the massive tower of the Vor-Frelsers-Kirke—must needs be left to the guide-books. Perhaps, coming here as one has direct from Stockholm, it is only natural to find oneself making mental comparisons between the two places in respect to the question of general picturesqueness. I have no doubt in my own mind that, in spite of the many strong claims of its rival on one's admiration, Stockholm must be awarded the palm. There is one striking difference between the western and the eastern capital that immediately forces itself upon the visitor's notice; in the case of the former, the city and the water may be regarded as two separate things; in that of the latter, the two

are closely inter-related and inseparable. One can walk all about the central and most important parts of Christiania, and yet be entirely unaware of the beautiful harbour and even more lovely fiord that opens out of it, a long stretch of exquisitely varied scenery, seawards. In Stockholm, on the other hand, not only is the city divided through its very midst by the outflow of Lake Mälaren into the Baltic, and its site, further, cut up into islands here and there by ramifications of the same broad stream, but also practically every building that has any interest at all for the traveller is to be found located somewhere or other in the region of the water-side. On these distinctive topographic grounds, to Stockholm must certainly be accorded pre-eminence in local charm. At the same time, there are land excursions to be taken in the vicinity of Christiania, particularly among the gently-sloping, grassy, pine-clad hills, at the foot of which the city lies, which, of their kind, have nothing to equal them in the neighbourhood of the Swedish capital. One of these trips—the easiest, and, perhaps, in point of scenery equal to any—a party of us takes together after lunch. A fairly long tram-ride from our hotel door through interesting streets and out into the suburbs brings us to the terminus at Majorstuen; from there we proceed by a steeply-graded electrical railway that carries us slowly up a winding single track, through most delightful surroundings of rock and woodland, to a point two-thirds of the way to the summit of the Holmenkollen, from whence the rest of the journey has to be completed by carriage or afoot. From the terrace of the Café that crowns the hill at its highest a magnificent prospect is to be enjoyed. In the immediate foreground, a wild medley of tree and bush, the thick undergrowth intersected here and there by

narrow, twisting pathways. Below this, again, mapped out by their low hedge-boundaries, yellow stubble fields and lush pasture-lands, fringing the furthermost edges of which are the ragged outskirts of Christiania, that, a tumbled miscellany of roof and spire, basks grey and rose and verdant in the rays of the fierce autumn sun. Beyond this, once more, the sea—a shimmering expanse of faint metallic blue; broad, where the dotted snow of sails and the drifting smoke of steamers indicate the land-locked waters of the harbour, and gradually shrinking into a mere sinuous, broken thread of silver as the fiord trends away southward to lose itself in the distant Skagerak. It is indeed 'good to be here,' a welcome restfulness and refreshment to mind and eye alike, after the rush and turmoil of travel; and the western sky is already beginning to glow with sunset reds and golds before we can bring ourselves to leave the appealing beauties of so fair a scene to catch a returning train to the city. After dinner in the Café of the Grand Hotel, and a final stroll in the warm dusk down the leafy avenues of the Karl Johans Gade, where 'all the world,' fashionable and otherwise, is taking its evening promenade, I hasten to the station so as to be in plenty of time for the express, which is due to start Bergen-wards at 10.52. On arrival there I find the great booking hall in possession of a crowd of (for the most part) wretchedly tired and seedy-looking men, who are being marshalled into some sort of order by half a dozen or so lynx-eyed and flurried officials. I learn on enquiry that they are Russian reservists, who have just landed from America, and who are now on their way to Petrograd to be put into military shape before joining their regiments at the front. Their presence seems to excite a good deal of interest among the bystanders, some of whom, I notice,

are offering them kindly attentions in the form of cigarettes and chocolates. That my luggage has been entirely forgotten by the porter, who, the knave, has already received a good tip on the strength of his promise to follow along with it at once to my carriage, and that I have to dash out and stagger back with it myself from the further end of the platform on the very verge of the train's departure, are among those little incidents of travel that serve to give it flavour and interest—at least, after one is back again in the sleeping-car, with the belongings in question safely by one's side!

Tuesday, September 7th.

I awake, shivering with cold, in the grey light of early dawn to find the train running through the wildest and most wonderful of mountain scenery. Little surprise, indeed, that the temperature has so perceptibly dropped, for practically all night we have been travelling on an upward gradient, and, now, some 150 miles from Christiania, and 2,000—3,000 feet above sea-level, we are in the midst of grim, bitter, eternal winter. Not a trace of vegetation to be seen; everywhere are bare, black rocks, beryl-hued tarns and pools, and rugged fields and escarpments of snow, here, broken through by the sudden yawn of a deep ravine, and, there, in the remoter background, soaring into hoary highlands and jagged, ivory peaks. This famous railway, which unites the two largest towns of Norway, is about 330 miles in length, took thirteen years to complete at a cost of nearly £3,000,000, and has been open for traffic since 1909. As a feat of engineering, its construction in the face of tremendous difficulties and hindrances is a triumphal monument to the enterprise, ingenuity and perseverance that carried it successfully through,

while, for sheer, primitive grandeur of the country it traverses, it can scarcely have its equal in Europe. After Gjeilo (2,604 ft.) the line threads its way for some distance through a long series of avalanche sheds and timber barriers erected as a defence against the blizzards that rage in the district during the winter months; indispensable protections, which, to the sight-seer, however, are an unmitigated nuisance, as they greatly interfere with one's enjoyment of the scenery at some of its most striking points. From the Taugevand, the highest altitude attained (4,270 ft.), the line winds rapidly downwards through snow-sheds, cuttings and tunnels galore; arctic barrenness gradually yielding to the welcome green of herbage and trees, and the mountains on either side, with their forests of sombre pine, their leaping torrents and their precipitous, boulder-strewn gorges, looming ever more majestically in height as the descent continues, until, after the long Gravehals tunnel beyond Myrdal, a broad valley is somewhat abruptly entered, and with the reaching of Voss, another thirty miles further on, the sterner features of the district have completely disappeared. At Voss, the great tourist-centre of this particular part of Norway, a considerable halt is made, but, as the railway authorities take this opportunity of attaching to the train a restaurant-car, the delay passes quickly and pleasantly enough in the enjoyment of a breakfast, for which the keen mountain air has sharpened appetite to a razor-edge. The remainder of the journey to Bergen calls for a pen far more graphic than my own to do even faintest justice to its varied and arresting beauties. Now, the line meanders through a river valley, with its ever-changing panorama; now, it enters a narrow defile, between towering, tree-clad crags, at whose rocky base there rushes, on the left, a

foaming, blue-green torrent; again, with swift succession of tantalizing tunnels, it skirts, some hundred feet above the surface of the water, the vast silver expanse of the Sörfiord, giving enchanting views of distant mountains mirrored in the glassy surface; and, finally, here, twisting through deep cuttings, where hardy ferns and sturdy bush-growth almost brush against the carriage windows, and, there, circling some beetling cliff on a ledge ingeniously carved in the face of the rock by the skilled Norse engineers, it emerges into the more open, cultivated country that marks the environs of its terminus in the quaint old sea-port 'City of the seven hills.' We reach Bergen at 11, with a longish walk before us from the station to the Faestningsbrygge, the quay of the deep-sea steamers, alongside of which the boat for Newcastle is awaiting her passengers. But, after many hours in the train, a stretch of the legs is by no means unwelcome, and the whole party finds its way gradually in straggling detachments down to the Docks, leaving the luggage to be brought on by a small army of porters and trollies. The vessel destined to be our conveyance across the turbulent, perilous waters of the North Sea—the 'Mira'—does not prepossess us at first sight either with her size or her general spruceness of appearance, but, below, her appointments are quite passably good, and her cabins both clean and comfortable. A somewhat alarming incident befalls as we are waiting on deck for the start, which is promptly hailed by the timid as a happy augury for the fortunes of the coming voyage. Three loaded railway trucks, which are being shunted along the quay, refuse to answer to their brakes and come charging down upon the gangways that connect our ship with the shore. The first they smash into splinters; the next, on which

is grouped a gossiping knot of porters, they toss up into the air, sending the unfortunate men flying in all directions; the third they push before them and crush against a lamp-post, which latter, though bent double by the impact, nevertheless effectually brings their wild career to an end. 'Glory be!' remarks an American lady standing by my side, 'it's almighty kind of it to happen now; I reckon, sir, that little bit of a break-up's franked us safe to old England'—her theory being, as is presently divulged, that mishaps 'don't hunt in couples,' and that the occurrence of one provides a safe conduct through the zone of any possible successor. Well, as things eventuate, her prophecy proves a correct one, and, as no particularly serious harm is occasioned by the contretemps in question, it is certainly 'an ill wind that blows no good' if it succeeds in providing restful solace for but a single trembling soul for a whole fifty-two hours of otherwise unbearably anxious travel. We cast off soon after 1.30, getting a fine retrospect of Bergen, and the great rocky mass of the Flöifjeld that provides an imposing background to the picturesque city and harbour, as we run out of the Vaagen into the somewhat featureless fjord that connects the old Hanseatic port with the North Sea. With a sympathetic foresight that does the authorities much credit, luncheon is served during our passage down these smooth and land-locked waters; for, once outside the shelter of the bare and island-studded coast, 'a certain liveliness' is encountered, for which some of our party are obviously unprepared. When we have been an hour or two at sea a curious instance occurs of the sort of mistake to which nervous imaginativeness is wont to be liable, especially when coincidence seems to give substantial foundation to its fears. The mistiness of the morning has yielded to

the bright sunshine of a perfect afternoon, and in the cold, clear air objects are sharply visible right away to the furthest horizon. Some two miles off on the port bow is a long, double-funnelled steamer, blowing from her escape-pipes a white cloud of vapour; in the immediate vicinity of our own vessel are shooting up at frequent intervals tall jets of foaming water. I happen to be talking to the mate, when one of the passengers runs excitedly up, exclaiming, 'I say, do you see that? That must be a German warship over there, and she's shelling us!' I must say that for the moment it looks uncommonly likely that our impassioned friend is in the right; but the bluff sailor-man—who, by the way, speaks English like a native—has little sympathy to waste on the alarmist; he is only immensely amused. 'Nothing to be frightened at there, sir,' he replies, with a burst of hearty laughter, 'it's not shots that are making that splashing; it's the spouting of a school of whales!' Well, whales or no whales, there the sudden fountains leap and fall, and if the hysterics that associate the phenomenon with the unwelcome attentions of an enemy cruiser deserved to be humiliated by the bathos of its explanation, at any rate, in the circumstances, the illusion is readily understandable. The rest of the day passes uneventfully enough in reading and chatting on the upper deck; the crisp brilliance of the afternoon and a pale, windy-looking sunset being followed by a splendour of unclouded moonlight.

Wednesday, September 8th.

The early hours of this morning provide an entertaining episode, which, incidentally, causes to myself some moments of considerable alarm. At 6 a.m., I am lying drowsily in my bunk, half-unconsciously listening

to the regular pulsing of the ship's engines, when suddenly I realize that the beat is changing its rhythm—is slowing gradually down—has ceased altogether! I jump up and look out of the port-hole, and see close alongside the stern portion of a war-ship's low, grey-painted hull. What may be our visitor's nationality there is no means of ascertaining from the very limited view obtainable. My first impression—one, perhaps, natural enough in the circumstances—is that the dreaded thing has befallen at last, and that some swift-heeled, prowling German cruiser has made us an easy prize. Good-bye in such a case, then, in the first place, to my precious despatches, which must be consigned without delay to a watery grave; and farewell, too, in the second, to all thoughts of 'Home, sweet Home,' for the misery and iron of a Hun prison will be most certainly our fate. I am thoroughly ashamed of my fears when a rush on deck reveals the real truth of the happening. The vessel that has overhauled us is an English torpedo-destroyer, H.M.S. 'Néréide,' out on patrol duty, and her business with the 'Mira' is one of examination of the ship's papers for the purpose of identification. Two officers come on board, and remain closeted for some time with our captain in his cabin; I have a brief chat with one of them presently, mainly in search of news. But, though he has little of interest to report as regards the progress of the war, he has a good story to tell of his experiences in the naval 'scrap' off Heligoland, in which his vessel played a subsidiary part. Half an hour suffices for the formalities of inspection; the 'Néréide' drops astern; her boat is hoisted once more on the davits; and, with much waving of mutual salutation, she swings at right angles to our course, making off to the southward at a race-horse turn of

speed. If my memory serves me rightly, to-day is the occasion of the 'Grand Fleet's' historic sweep of the North Sea in its (fruitless) attempt to round up any of the enemy's battleships or cruisers that may be discoverable in its waters. Anyhow, that some big combined movement of war-ships is afoot is obvious enough, for the horizon on either hand is smudged with trails of heavy smoke, and, here and there, the distant forms of the Leviathans themselves are faintly visible through the haze. Out of the two possible sources of danger, therefore, with which this voyage may have been associated at the start, one, the chance of capture, may be said no longer to exist, thanks to the practical measures for removing it adopted by the British Admiralty. The peril, however, of the insidious floating mine is even more instant and emphatic than ever. The rules and arrangements that prevail on board have in this regard a sinister suggestiveness of their own. No one, for instance, is allowed to go nearer to the bows than the bridge; the fore-hold is entirely empty of cargo; under the pillow of each bunk is a life-belt ready for immediate use; and, perhaps most grimly significant of all, the ship's boats are swung outward and lowered to the level of the rail, being held steady in their places by a single rope looped over them at either extremity that can be severed in an instant by a hatchet suspended in ominous prominence just below the keel. It is a fine day, with a bright sun and a cold, brisk breeze, but there is rather more motion than, apparently, is acceptable to the majority of our fellow-passengers. Since yesterday our course has been shifted to the south-west, so that the swell from that quarter, which gave us, to begin with, an uncomfortably heavy roll, now provides head seas and a more lively pitching

than is altogether pleasant. Mainly on this account, I suppose, meals to-day are very poorly patronized; at the same time I must confess that the menu, while plentiful and good enough of its kind, is scarcely remarkable for that daintiness of quality and cooking which is required for the quickening of doubtful appetites or the allaying of incipient qualms. It is extraordinary how empty the sea is of ships of any size. This afternoon we are running down the Scotch coast, which is quite hidden in the haze, and one would naturally expect to find in these comparatively safe home-waters a considerable amount of traffic. But, save for an occasional small tramp steamer and a few straggling coveys of trawlers, all very conspicuously flying large Red Ensigns, there is absolutely nothing to be seen. As a matter of fact, however, navigation in these parts is just now a rather 'unhealthy' business, owing to the presence of mines that have been driven north-westwards in unusual quantities by a long continuance of wind from the 'wrong' direction. Towards tea-time we pass over what must have been the scene of some hapless vessel's destruction by one of these diabolic engines, for, in quite a wide radius, the surface of the water is covered with floating objects, mostly difficult to identify. But broken planks and strips of oil-cloth and masses of straw, stretched out in long, yellow, heaving lanes by the action of the current, tell their own tragic tale with an unmistakable suggestiveness. At 8 p.m., we run into a tremendous rain-storm, which brings with it a darkness so thick and impenetrable that the 'Mira,' after half an hour at dead slow speed, gives up the attempt as over-dangerous, and comes to an ignominious standstill. The wind has quite dropped and, with its failure, the sea is appreciably

smoother, but it is not the most attractive of situations to lie hour after hour, sluggishly dipping and twisting on an oily ground-swell, hemmed in on all sides by walls of solid blackness, and any chance of ascertaining our whereabouts effectually eliminated not only by the extinction of all the guiding lights along the coast-line, but also by the fact that, even were they kindled as usual, they would be totally indistinguishable, thanks to the blinding downpour. Some of our company go off to bed in disgust; others pace the deck dolefully, in faint hopes of an early improvement in the weather; the rest of us philosophically make the best of a bad job by holding an impromptu concert in the little music room, which is prolonged well beyond midnight, most of our number contributing something to the programme, and the ' star turns ' being provided by a truly cosmopolitan trio—an English songster, a French violinist (a really remarkable performer on his instrument), and a lady accompanyist from Finland, who, by the way, speaks fluently seven languages!

Thursday, September 9th.

We are wakened at a very early hour this morning by the deep bellowing of the steamer's siren, and those of us who are curious enough to seek on deck the cause of the disturbance have an obvious answer waiting for them at the head of the companion-way. For the rain of yesterday has given place to the densest and clammiest of fogs, in the folds of whose dripping curtain both sea and ship alike have completely disappeared. Save for a few fitful starts during the night, we have made no progress whatever since supper-time, and now, if appearances count for anything, we are likely to remain a fixture for a considerable time to

come. To think that this exasperating delay has been brought upon us with the haven where we would be comparatively near at hand! For they tell us at breakfast that, so far as is possible to ascertain, we are 'somewhere' in Northumbrian waters, and ought to be picking up a pilot boat in the vicinity of the Tyne about the time that lunch is served. At 11.30, however, the mist begins to thin a little, and, as some one sarcastically declares, 'helped on a good deal more by the whistle than by the screw,' we start creeping on again at a snail's pace, every now and then finding ourselves close beside some dim wraith of a vessel, anchored, where we are groping along, well inshore, and adding her brazen voice to that of invisible others in a cacophonous chorus to which our own 'Mira' is by no means the least stentorian of contributors. What does this trumpet-tongued, bell-ringing congregation of spectral steamers indicate? Have we had the good luck to stumble on our destination? A little launch comes fussing past in the murk, and our captain roars out a 'Where are we?' through the megaphone as she scurries by. 'Off the Blyth,' is the yelled response of her oilskin-clad skipper—and she is gone. 'Only an hour's run,' declares our consolatory friend, the mate; and the fog overhears his sanguine prophecy, and laughs in its sleeve! For almost immediately it comes down even more densely than ever, and we take from 12.30 until 4 p.m. to cover the twelve miles to where a Government tug is awaiting us off the twin breakwater heads at Tynemouth with all sorts of enquiries and directions shouted from her bridge; among the latter, instructions to hoist at the foremast a specially lettered flag, which, presumably (if they can see it), will apprise the authorities on shore of all that they need to know. Hardly,

however, has this identifying signal been bent on to the halliards, when, by one of those strange, swift atmospheric changes, familiar to all who 'go down to the sea in ships,' the solid bank of vapour parts suddenly landwards, as if torn asunder by invisible hands, and the whole coast-line stands out in clear relief, bathed in the warm, mellow radiance of a westering sun. Home at last! Can it indeed be true? Tiresome days of anxious travel finally done with, and England—real, unphantasmal England—actually within vision of our very eyes? Some one has insisted that it is amply worth while to endure the anguish of hopes that at any moment may be disappointed, if only for the supreme joy to be experienced when their unexpected fruition is presently placed irremovably in one's hands. Well, writing this as I do in vivid memory of my own feelings as the 'Mira' thudded her way slowly up the broad and busy Tyne; on, with all a week's impatience and misgiving abandoned in the fog that blotted out the sea behind; on, with the light in our faces, past the bustling wharves, the clanging ship-yards, the tall, grimy coal-tips, the dreary warehouses, the dingy dwellings of my own mother-country, up an ever-narrowing, dirty stream to an unpretentious little dock on the outskirts of steep and uncomely Newcastle, I can only say that I most cordially agree. It is well after 6 o'clock before, having made fast to our berth, we are invaded by Customs' officials in company with a host of boisterous porters; the former, demanding the display of passports, and informing us that no one is to go ashore until the whole of his or her luggage has been most rigorously examined; the latter, with sheaves of morning papers on sale, which disappear like hot cakes, and with plenty of additional intelligence to

supplement their contents withal. We hear, among other things, that the British army is at last 'doing well' in France; that 150 German mines were taken out of the sea yesterday between Berwick-on-Tweed and Sunderland; that a Norwegian steamer was blown up a day or so ago off Peterhead (it must have been the remainder of this unfortunate vessel that we passed on Wednesday afternoon); and that after the 'Venus' has left Bergen to-morrow for Newcastle the service from that port across the North Sea is to be suspended 'until further notice.' Thanks to the courtesy of the chief Customs' officer on board, the presentation of my courier's credentials not only exempts my baggage from the scrutiny of his myrmidons, but also thereby secures me the services of the one and only cab available; so that, long before the rest of our party have been able to shake themselves free of the 'Mira,' I am comfortably installed in the 'Station Hotel,' acquitting myself of my first duty towards my neighbours in far-off Petrograd in stamping and posting the extensive budget of letters that has been entrusted to me for that purpose. Later on, some half-dozen of us celebrate the prosperous issue of our journey in the time-honoured fashion of a little farewell dinner, and by 10 o'clock are glad enough to take ourselves off whither our thoughts during the last few nights have often longingly wandered—the soft, luxurious refuge of a cosy English bed.

'I should like well enough,' writes Hazlitt in his Essay on 'Going a Journey,' 'to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home.' Surely he expresses there the characteristic sentiment of every true-born Englishman. The mantle of Ulysses is the

natural inheritance of the Anglo-Saxon. The call of the wider world is in his island blood. He is an adventurer, an experience-hunter by instinct. His interests and curiosity demand larger opportunities, fuller satisfactions, than those discoverable in the neighbourhood of the Parish Pump. Nevertheless, Ulysses-like again, however far afield he goes, he travels only at the end of a long tether whose anchorage is the domestic hearth. Seas and continents may sunder him from 'Tipperary,' but his 'heart's right there' all the while. As he gads among 'the men and cities' of other lands, he thinks of the tale he will have presently to tell to a sympathetic audience by his 'ain fireside,' and already eagerly anticipates the hour when Penelope shall stand at the garden gate with a welcome for her sun-bronzed lord, and, may be, decrepid Argus have saved up the final tail-wag of extreme old age to honour the return of his beloved master. In one sense, to-night my interesting and not uneventful pilgrimage is past and over; in another, the best part of it is yet for to-morrow:—

Οἴκαδέ τ' ἐλθέμεναι καὶ νόστιμον ἦμαρ ἰδέσθαι.

From B. H. BLACKWELL'S LIST.

THE RUSSIANS AND THEIR LANGUAGE. By N. JARINTZOV. Demy 8vo, cloth, 6s. net.

Our translations of the modern Russian classics are often hopelesly inadequate. The author shows that this is almost inevitable. The clue to the amazing subtleties of the Russian language lies in an exact appreciation of the Russian character. As a Russian who has studied the two languages in their psychological aspects, Mme. Jarintzov is peculiarly fitted to give us this insight.

PICTURE TALES FROM THE RUSSIAN. With 130 illustrations.

MORE RUSSIAN PICTURE TALES. With 135 illustrations.

STILL MORE RUSSIAN PICTURE TALES. With 140 illustrations. By VALERY CARRICK. Translated by NEVILL FORBES. Uniform Volumes. Oblong Imperial 16mo, coloured picture boards, 2s. 6d. net each.

'They are the most excellent contributions to nursery literature and laughter that have appeared since the days of Lewis Carrol.'—*The Daily News.*

'For pure charm they rival the best of Grimm.'—*The Bookman.*

'The tales are a real addition to our knowledge of folklore, and the pictures are inimitable in their humour and technical cleverness.'—*The Guardian.*

'These tales are a delight.'—*T.P.'s Weekly.*

TALES BY POLISH AUTHORS. Translated by E. C. M. BENECKE. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d. net.

'This is a book to be bought and read; it cannot fail to be remembered. . . . The whole book is full of passionate genius. . . . it is delightfully translated.'—*The Contemporary Review.*

'Translated with great skill. . . . They yield a vivid and fascinating glimpse of that strange and unfortunate nation, of which, in reality, we know so little.'—*The Guardian.*

'Idylls of realism and models, at the same time, of a literary form which has too long been neglected.'—*The New Age.*

AN ENGLISH-SERBIAN PHRASE BOOK. With easy grammar. For use in *all* the south Slav countries. By LOUIS CAHEN and NEVILL FORBES, M.A., *Reader in Russian and the Slavonic Languages in the University of Oxford.* Crown 8vo, strong wrappers, 1s. net.

'A marvel of clearness, compression, and interest. . . . We have never seen another equal to it.'—*The Aberdeen Daily Journal.*

'Most admirably fulfils its purpose.'—*The Oxford Magazine.*

A WORD-FOR-WORD RUSSIAN STORY BOOK. With Phonetic Transcription, for beginners. By NEVILL FORBES, *Reader in Russian in the University of Oxford.* Crown 8vo, 1s. net. [*In preparation.*

Oxford: B. H. BLACKWELL, Broad Street

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C052198906

313926

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY